

The Experience of Roman Legionary Service  
from Augustus to Septimius Severus

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Submitted to the University of Oxford for the Degree of DPhil in  
Ancient History



## Abstract

This thesis examines the social experiences, relationships, and everyday interactions of Roman imperial legionaries, exploring how the organisational structures to which these soldiers belonged shaped their lives. The thesis uses combat motivation theory to provide a framework for studying these issues, exploring soldiers' attachments to their various units, and the motivational mechanisms which the army exerted on its soldiers. The result is a bottom-up exploration of the social environment of the legion, foregrounding issues of identity, community, and social networks. Detailed study of soldiers' relationships with civilians, and with the members of extended military communities, leads to a full picture of the social context in which Roman legionaries served.

This thesis extends a number of key developments in Roman army studies, including the 'legion as society/community' approach, social network theory, the application of military sociology, and the study of the extended communities, providing detailed discussion of numerous issues, some of which until now have only been cursorily considered in modern scholarship.

Chapter 1 considers the idea of the 'primary group' in the context of the Roman army, and the importance of interpersonal bonds more generally. The primary group has dominated modern military sociology, leading some ancient historians to apply the concept to the ancient world; I attempt to test the evidence. In chapter 2, I consider attachment to the legion, again testing whether modern analogies to regimental systems hold water. Chapter 3 considers the soldiers' relationship with the emperor, and how this distant figure manifested himself in the lives of the soldiers. Chapter 4 discusses remuneration, including pay, rewards, and promotion opportunities. Chapter 5 turns to discipline, reassessing the

army's reputation for exceptionally harsh discipline while also offering an examination of training and drill.

Chapter 6 further builds the picture of the legionary's social world by considering relations between soldiers and civilians, entering a long-standing debate on the isolation of soldiers from regular provincial society. Chapter 7 contains a lengthy discussion of the extended military community, attempting to elucidate some of the different experiences that its constituent groups might have. Here, suppliers, slaves, and prostitutes are treated in particular detail. Chapter 8 makes the case for recognising the detachment of soldiers from units as a key part of the legionary experience, and after exploring the organisation of this practice in detail, considers its implications for the other themes of the thesis.

## Acknowledgements

Completing this thesis was not an easy task. A global pandemic, two full-time jobs, seven different flats and two changes of country constitute just some of the disruptions I encountered – which makes the thanks I owe to those who helped me all the more significant.

My supervisor, Jonathan Prag, has been encouraging and enthusiastic, helping me to shift directions with my work and explore my interests. He has never let me down, either with his feedback, which is always clear and useful, or with his commitment to assisting me with practical arrangements. Jonathan has been patient, understanding, and realistic, and I have been extremely fortunate to work with someone as humane as he is academically brilliant.

I would also like to mention two previous academic mentors, without whom I never would have got here: Lynette Mitchell and Robert Parker. Lynette recognised my aptitude when I was going through some difficult times as an undergraduate at the University of Exeter, and was determined to make sure that I realised my potential. It is thanks to her that I made my way to Oxford – and once I got there for my MSt, I couldn't have asked for a better mentor than Robert Parker. In the months I spent under his tuition, I experienced the most remarkably rapid intellectual growth, as he challenged me to be the best scholar possible in his own calm, considered way.

I have no doubt that my receipt of funding for the DPhil also owed a great deal to Robert's support. I must thank the AHRC, Lady Margaret Hall, and the Faculty of Classics for my studentship, without which I would never have been able to contemplate doctoral study.

Receiving news of the funding was one of the most joyous moments of my life, especially as a first-generation university student.

Rhiannon Ash, Georgy Kantor, and Ed Bispham provided helpful comments and stimulating discussion at my transfer and confirmation hearings. Numerous other scholars gave insightful feedback on ideas from this thesis which I presented at various conferences.

For much-needed laughter and distraction, I have to thank all of my friends in Oxford, Worthing, London, and elsewhere, and many of my colleagues at Ubisoft Mainz and CaptureAge.

My parents, Michael and Lucy, have always supported me in pursuing whatever makes me happy. Moving far away from home to sit in libraries may have seemed a puzzling choice, but they backed me nonetheless, driving me to and from university, letting me flood the loft with books, and always providing a home full of warmth and laughter to which I could return. And since they let me spend countless hours playing *Age of Empires* as a child, I suppose I can thank them for sparking my interest in the ancient world too.

Ria Kapoor has been by my side for more than five years now, and without her I don't think I'd have made it through. Anybody stuck in a one-bedroom flat with me trying to write a thesis while a pandemic rages outside deserves profound thanks simply for not throwing me out of a window – but Ria's generosity and kindness have been astonishing. The belief and support she gave me have been essential.

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## Introduction

Few aspects of the ancient world have provided such fascination, both among academic historians and the wider public, as the Roman army. Remarkably, the study of the subject shows no signs of exhaustion; in fact, there has arguably never been a more stimulating time to study the Roman army. Our understanding of combat has been transformed by bottom-up approaches attending to the experiences of the soldiers;<sup>1</sup> scholars are more carefully considering the impact of the army on the populations among whom they lived;<sup>2</sup> and the lives of those who lived alongside the soldiers, especially women, are receiving long-overdue attention.<sup>3</sup> A general turn toward social history, focusing on the experiences of Roman soldiers rather than strictly on organisational structures, has been particularly influential for me.<sup>4</sup>

Much like the Roman army, the structure of this thesis was not neatly conceived in one go; rather, it is the result of a long process of development, and as such has its own idiosyncrasies and vestiges. The best way to introduce this thesis will be to describe its development. Originally, my intention was to explore the mechanics of Roman combat from the mid to late Republic, in the vein of various other studies inspired by John Keegan's *The Face of Battle*. Although there has been much excellent work on this subject over the past two decades, there is still much left to explore, and existing work sometimes lacks a certain rigour.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, our knowledge of battle mechanics has not been properly integrated into the wider picture of battle. Kimberly Kagan has levelled a sensible critique at *The Face of Battle* and its imitators, arguing that Keegan risked dispensing so thoroughly with grand tactical considerations that his investigations of individuals in

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. Goldsworthy (1996).

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Mattingly (2011).

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Van Driel-Murray (1994); Allison (2013); Greene (2013), (2020).

<sup>4</sup> Especially in the work of Simon James (1999) and Ian Haynes (2013).

<sup>5</sup> E.g. E.g. Goldsworthy (1996); Sabin (1996), (2000); Daly (2002); Anders (2015).

combat merely yielded colourful snapshots in a sprawling, unintelligible mess.<sup>6</sup> Although I disagree with Kagan's proposed shift back to the grand tactical level of analysis, she is certainly correct that excessive focus on the individual's experience can hinder us from truly understanding causation on the battlefield. Additionally, there had not been a sufficient attempt to integrate studies of Roman morale on an institutional level with analysis of battlefield behaviour. As with Adrian Goldsworthy's book, in which a cursory discussion of factors potentially affecting morale is sandwiched between discussions of battlefield actualities, there has not yet been a satisfying attempt to discuss how these factors might actually produce different battlefield behaviours.<sup>7</sup>

The thesis which I planned at this stage would therefore be made up of a detailed analysis of battlefield mechanics, following the work of Sabin, Goldsworthy, etc., as well as an in-depth exploration of the nature of morale, and how it was affected by factors both on and off the battlefield, situational and institutional. As I approached this task, I naturally enough encountered Ramsay MacMullen's article 'The Legion as a Society', which argues that 'when short-term enrolments of earlier times gave way to terms of years or even decades, civilian values and character were bound to be distorted by the longer influence'; the result was, as his title implies, that military units began to develop their own, unique 'cultures'.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, MacMullen introduced concepts from modern military sociology, including the 'primary group', which I had occasionally seen mentioned in other works on Roman warfare. It was by exploring military sociology, and combat motivation studies in particular, that I decided upon the structure for this thesis.

Combat motivation studies, and indeed military sociology more broadly, had their origins in the aftermath of World War II. The field has been permanently shaped by the

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<sup>6</sup> Kagan (2005), 7-22.

<sup>7</sup> Goldsworthy (1996), 248-64.

<sup>8</sup> MacMullen (1984), 440.

‘Big Three’: Marshall (1947), Shils and Janowitz (1948), and Stouffer (1949).<sup>9</sup> All three studies argued strongly that ideological concerns, except in the cases of a few fanatics, do nothing to sustain the soldier in combat: he fights not for abstractions, but for his ‘primary group’. On this, Shils and Janowitz cited the definition of Charles Cooley: ‘By primary groups I mean those characterized by intimate face-to-face association and cooperation... It is a ‘we’; it involves the sort of sympathy and mutual identification for which ‘we’ is the natural expression.’<sup>10</sup> Cooley wrote in the context of civilian life; in the military environment, the primary group takes the role most often provided by the family, in satisfying ‘primary personality demands’.<sup>11</sup> The soldier is especially dependent on the primary group in a military context because of his isolation from civilian life and the extreme stress of the environment. His need for social acceptance, comradeship, and reassurance ensure that he is willing to risk himself in combat, both in order to protect his ‘buddies’ and to comply with the demands of the group. For as long as a soldier of the Wehrmacht felt himself to be a member of a primary group and bound by its demands, argued Shils and Janowitz, he would willingly fight; likewise, Stouffer emphasised the importance of interpersonal relations in motivating American soldiers, particularly stressing the importance of a standard of masculinity: ‘the man who lived up to the code of the combat soldier had proved his manhood.’<sup>12</sup>

The primary group remained at the centre of combat motivation studies in subsequent decades, but its precise nature began to be re-examined. Roger Little, for example, examined more closely the operation of ‘buddy relations’ in the Korean War, stressing the bonds between pairs of individuals rather than entire groups.<sup>13</sup> Charles

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<sup>9</sup> Wessely (2006), 275.

<sup>10</sup> Cooley (1909), 23; Shils and Janowitz (1948), 283 n.3.

<sup>11</sup> Shils and Janowitz (1948), 281.

<sup>12</sup> Stouffer (1949), 134.

<sup>13</sup> Little (1964).

Moskos criticised previous primary group studies for being somewhat romanticised: ‘Rather than viewing soldiers’ primary groups as some kind of semi-mystical bond of comradeship, they can be better understood as pragmatic and situational responses.’<sup>14</sup> In the Vietnam War, to the extent that primary groups did form effectively, they fostered dissent and resistance from war aims; the main goal of the group (survival) contradicted orders to fight, there was little ideological support for the war, and fixed year-long terms of service meant that unlike soldiers in World War II, the soldier’s ability to go home did not depend on ultimate victory.<sup>15</sup> Moskos also argued that the Vietnam War demonstrated that ‘latent ideological factors’ – some measure of commitment to national goals – were necessary if the soldier was to endanger himself.<sup>16</sup> Ideological factors were also central to Omar Bartov’s study of German soldiers on the Eastern Front in World War II, whose commitment to a Nazi worldview, along with a deliberately brutalising and terrifying system of discipline, sustained them even when casualties meant that primary groups had disintegrated.<sup>17</sup>

In my opinion, the greatest weakness of primary group theory is that since primary group formation ‘is a universal, almost instinctual phenomenon’<sup>18</sup> – and one which occurs with remarkable speed<sup>19</sup> – its power to compare armies is limited (since primary group formation can be found in all of them). Certainly, practices such as individual rotation and replacement can be disruptive to primary groups, but their formation is very much an organic process which is not dependent on institutional intervention. If one is to argue that an army’s cohesiveness was maintained based on its superior harnessing of the power of the primary group, it is necessary to demonstrate that primary group bonds are

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<sup>14</sup> Moskos (1970), 145.

<sup>15</sup> Wessely (2006), 280-1).

<sup>16</sup> Moskos (1970), 155.

<sup>17</sup> Bartov (1992).

<sup>18</sup> Wesbrook (1980), 256.

<sup>19</sup> Wessely (2006), 279.

significantly more intense than in the average military setting (a high bar), or that there is a serious institutional effort to keep primary groups together both on and off the battlefield, and ensure minimal disruption to the groups' integrity in terms of personnel.

No serious critic of the primary group theory – which continues to be strongly advocated<sup>20</sup> – dismisses its importance entirely; but it alone can never be a sufficient explanation for combat effectiveness. The small group's goals must be congruent with those of a larger collective if it is to promote combat effectiveness at all; and there have been sufficient instances of troops fighting on despite the integrity of their primary groups being compromised to indicate that there are other factors which sustain men in battle. But it is difficult to see how the many alternative factors which have been proposed – esprit de corps, discipline, ideological commitment, leadership, training, remuneration – work precisely, or relate to one another.

One need not spend very long surveying examinations of combat motivation to become lost in a sea of proposed influences on troop behaviour. But a very effective framework for organising these concepts has been articulated by Major Stephen Wesbrook.<sup>21</sup> First, Wesbrook borrows from compliance theory to establish the three compliance patterns by which an army may motivate its soldiers. There are, broadly speaking, three types of power which an organisation can wield over its members: coercive (threatening punishment), utilitarian (promising reward), and normative (making moral demands). The individual's involvement with the organisation can be either alienative, calculative, or moral. The compliance pattern consists in the combinations of these types of power and types of involvement, of which only three combinations are viable: alienative/coercive, calculative/utilitarian, and moral/normative. Although most

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<sup>20</sup> King (2015), 9.

<sup>21</sup> Wesbrook (1980).

organisations use all three, one type of compliance relationship is typically predominant.<sup>22</sup> Wesbrook claims that the conditions of modern warfare necessitate that the moral/normative relationship (always potentially the strongest, and the most effective in the absence of direct supervision) is the only sufficient method by which a soldier can be motivated.

The second component of the framework is to examine the ‘collectivity’ whose interests the soldier feels obligated to support: ‘The moral involvement of the soldier with a larger collectivity is dependent on the formation of psychological bonds between the soldier and the collectivity such that the soldier believes, more or less consciously, that his own welfare and that of the group are related.’<sup>23</sup> Wesbrook identifies three possible groups: the primary group, the military unit (e.g. a modern regiment), and the national socio-political system. A neat division between squad/division/country rarely fits so easily even in the modern world, however, and in the Roman context, we will have to assess where *contubernia*, centuries, cohorts, and legions fit into the picture. Furthermore, unit-level commitments have received little focus in scholarship – and indeed, in contrast to the highly personal primary group and entirely abstract socio-political system, modern theory provides little satisfying discussion of how individuals conceive of and relate to their units.

When I encountered this framework, it seemed to me an excellent way of discussing these issues: it places the many competing concepts thought to influence motivation into a clear structure, dividing the organisational structures to which the individual relates from the specific modes of motivation operant upon the individual. Previous discussions of Roman soldiers’ morale have consisted of rather disconnected lists;<sup>24</sup> this framework establishes clear relationships between the various concepts and

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<sup>22</sup> On compliance theory: Etzioni (1975), (1997).

<sup>23</sup> Wesbrook (1980), 251.

<sup>24</sup> E.g. Lee (1996); Goldsworthy (1996), 248-64.

allows for comparison of their relative importance. Shortly after reading Wesbrook, I found that another ancient historian, Jason Crowley, had already employed Wesbrook's work in his study of the psychology of the Athenian hoplite.<sup>25</sup>

This framework is still evident in the first half of this thesis, where I consider the legionary's commitment to his primary group (chapter 1), unit (i.e. legion, chapter 2), and emperor (chapter 3); and the effectiveness of remuneration (chapter 4) and discipline (chapter 5). However, as I began to work within this structure, a number of complications emerged. First, when considering the primary group – which, as explained above, relies on the isolation of soldiers from social influences outside the military environment – I was forced to question to what extent soldiers really were isolated from the outside world. The picture that emerged as I considered the 'soldier/civilian divide' was, I realised, more complicated than those terms suggest. In addition to the civilian societies in the provinces in which the legions were stationed (chapter 6), there were non-military personnel living in close proximity to military bases, with varying levels of social integration. I found these 'extended communities' both fascinating and under-studied in certain respects (examined in chapter 7)

Another thing which I realised to be crucially important was the physical dispersal of units through detachments, a subject to which I ultimately devoted an entire chapter (chapter 8). Throughout my research I had been suspicious of discussions which used nominal figures for unit strengths, ignoring the reality that many soldiers were split up from the rest of their legions; in addition, I found that discussions of legionary life often centred on large fortresses, ignoring the varied contexts in which soldiers served. These latter chapters also address the normative component of the framework by exploring fundamental aspects of everyday life in the army, and examining in detail the military

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<sup>25</sup> Crowley (2012). Lynn (1996) also drew on Wesbrook to discuss the armies of revolutionary France.

society that formed the legionary's social world.

Exploring these subjects meant moving beyond the framework outlined above, so one might question how useful that framework really is. However, although the thesis has sprawled out from its initially tight structure, I think that the framework has shown its usefulness precisely because thinking through it has exposed how complicated a great many issues in Roman army studies truly are, and because it has prompted numerous interesting questions to explore, small and large. I think it is both appropriate and satisfying for a doctoral dissertation to bear openly the vestigial signs of its – and its author's – development. The thesis which I present here is entirely different from the exploration of mid to late Republican combat with which I started, and, I believe, far more interesting.

For my timeframe, I have shifted to the period roughly from the reign of Augustus until that of Septimius Severus (c. 27 BC – AD 193). In this period, the army completed its shift from a conscript force, levied on an ad hoc basis, to a standing army. Although many of the reforms of Augustus (both civil and military) were continuations or formalisations of trends which had been occurring for a longer period, it is also the case that Augustus took the opportunity to structure the army as he wished. The dramatic reforms of Septimius Severus mark a sensible later limit for the thesis.<sup>26</sup> This period also furnishes some of the richest evidence for the subjects I wish to explore (though most of the evidence, it should be noted, comes from before the mid-second century AD).

Besides the sociological framework, the approach which unifies all my chapters is a commitment to exploring the lives of the ordinary *milites*, either doing so from a bottom-up perspective when the evidence offers the opportunity, or considering the impact of

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<sup>26</sup> Smith (1972).

organisational structures on their lives.<sup>27</sup> Social relationships, contacts and connections; community and belonging; the interactions in which soldiers engaged in their daily lives: these are the recurring topics of this thesis. Naturally, this thesis is not exhaustive in its coverage of issues relating to legionary life: issues such as religious life and the organisation of living quarters are treated only as they relate to other issues prompted by the framework, e.g. the worship of a unit's *genius*.

Before commencing with the first chapter, in which I begin to apply the framework outlined above, it would be valuable to discuss the recruitment of Roman legionaries. As I alluded to above, it is important to recognise that the core texts of modern military sociology need to be seen in the context of World War II, and the temporary conscript armies of Germany and the USA. For us to discuss Roman imperial legionaries, we must likewise understand the recruitment practices which brought men into the army, and what kind of men were enlisted.

After the civil wars of the late Republic, Augustus fixed the number of legions at 25, requiring some 150,000 men altogether. The opinion of Mommsen, supported by Brunt, that conscription remained the primary form of recruitment in the Principate, no longer holds any sway.<sup>28</sup> Forni estimated that each legion would only require around 240 new recruits annually (so 6,000 empire-wide); in normal circumstances, volunteer recruitment would be perfectly sufficient to supply such a total.<sup>29</sup> Mann surveys several examples of *dilectus* in the early Principate which clearly did involve some compulsion, concluding that 'probably throughout the principate citizens were legally liable to perform military service', but the vast majority of recruits were volunteers, and authorities were

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<sup>27</sup> As called for e.g. by James (1999), 24.

<sup>28</sup> Brunt (1974).

<sup>29</sup> Forni (1953), 30; Le Bohec (1994), 71.

loath to employ compulsion, especially in Italy itself.<sup>30</sup> Carrie argues that ‘from its inception the permanent army was conceived as a means for avoiding forced conscription’;<sup>31</sup> this is surely correct (although Carrie consistently overemphasises the extent to which Augustus’ reforms were drastic innovations rather than regularisations of prior developments). In some cases, units possessed sufficient numbers that willing volunteers could not be readily accommodated, as attested by the letters of Claudius Terentianus, who complained of his inability to obtain a transfer to a cohort from the fleet.<sup>32</sup>

The key trend in recruitment patterns throughout the Principate is an increase in localised recruitment. As Keppie notes, the provincialisation of the legions was a process underway from the middle of the first century BC;<sup>33</sup> but its development was enabled on a significant scale by the fact that legions were now stationed permanently in specific provinces, and often permanent fortresses – *legio II Augusta*, for instance, remained at Caerleon from the 70s AD until the second half of the third century.<sup>34</sup> But provincialisation was not a uniform process across the empire: its adoption naturally depended on the availability of nearby communities containing Roman citizens. Thus the armies of Britain, Germany, and Illyricum continued to receive recruits from ‘central’ sources (the reliable recruiting grounds of Italy, Narbonensis and Spain), while the armies in North Africa and Spain switched very quickly to local recruitment, enabled by the presence of long-standing Roman communities.<sup>35</sup> The picture is somewhat different in the East: dependence on Italy for recruits seems to have ceased already by the Julio-Claudian period, and local recruits

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<sup>30</sup> Mann (1983), 49-50.

<sup>31</sup> Carrie (1993), 106.

<sup>32</sup> *P. Mich.* VIII 468.

<sup>33</sup> Keppie (1997), 90.

<sup>34</sup> Holder (1982), 104-5.

<sup>35</sup> Mann (1983), 51.

were employed who ‘were but little Romanised’;<sup>36</sup> one must suppose either that eastern recruiters were not so concerned with this fact, or that eastern recruits were more willing to join the army despite not strongly affiliating with Roman culture.

Of course, strict observance of the citizenship qualification could not be maintained. Carrie summarises: ‘It is clear that from the time of Augustus the line of demarcation between those who could and could not be enrolled in the Roman army no longer fell between Roman citizens and the *peregrini* of the provinces, but rather, within each province, between small and middling property owners assimilated into an urban structure, or at least into a village, and propertyless common folk, urban or rural.’<sup>37</sup> This represents a remarkable shift from traditional Republican practice, although the normalisation of non-citizen recruitment had been underway since the mid-first century BC. Despite this obvious break with the traditional ethos of recruitment, a clear benefit of removing the restriction was that a larger pool of healthier, wealthier citizens was available, also further obviating the need for conscription.

As local recruitment increased, the proportion of Italians in the legions diminished: according to the statistics collected by Forni, Italians account for 62% of attestations of origin from Augustus to Caligula; 48% from Claudius to Nero; 22% from the Flavians to Trajan; and of the 2,056 attestations of origin from the time of Hadrian until the end of the third century, one finds only 37 Italians (1.8%).<sup>38</sup> Of course, one ought to be wary of percentages drawn from this data: not only does the surviving evidence constitute too small a sample for safe extrapolation, it also suffers from certain systematic biases, most obviously in terms of variable preservation (the conditions at Lambaesis being exceptionally kind), and potentially the degree to which the ‘epigraphic habit’ pertained

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 41. The term ‘Romanised’ is treated as far more problematic in modern scholarship (see e.g. Wallace-Hadrill (2008), c. 1).

<sup>37</sup> Carrie (1993), 107.

<sup>38</sup> My calculations from Le Bohec (1994), 83-4, tabulating the findings of Forni (1953).

differently between soldiers of different geographical or cultural origins. Nevertheless, the pattern is clear, and as military service became increasingly unpalatable to Italians, and the peacefulness of the high empire transformed the legions into relatively inactive garrison forces, it was entirely logical that military service should become a career for nearby provincials.<sup>39</sup>

What sort of men were recruited into the imperial legions? Campbell asserts that most early imperial recruits would have been poor, especially as conditions of service were insufficiently attractive to entice men of property and good family.<sup>40</sup> Tacitus – who himself regularly uses the pejorative *vulgus* to refer to the common soldiery<sup>41</sup> – reports that Tiberius complained in AD 23 that most of the volunteers he could find were ‘the destitute and vagrants’ (*inopes ac vagi*)<sup>42</sup> – a description which probably also fits most of the ‘mercenary’ soldiers of the first century BC, and indeed the ready supply of men willing to join the private militias active in late Republican politics, or even Spartacus’ slave uprising.<sup>43</sup> In the account of Cassius Dio, Maecenas offers advice to Augustus in 29 BC (but almost certainly a reflection of Dio’s own upper-class opinion in the early third century AD), to the effect that ordinary soldiers – whose profession he equates with menial labourers like porters – should be debarred from the Senate.<sup>44</sup> Elsewhere he suggests that the men most fit for military service would ordinarily turn to brigandage.<sup>45</sup> Goldsworthy has suggested that some proportion of the men would have had criminal backgrounds, and only those guilty of the most severe crimes were barred from service.<sup>46</sup>

This characterisation has been disputed; Phang, for instance, argues that in fact

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<sup>39</sup> Mann (1983), 49.

<sup>40</sup> Campbell (1984), 9-10.

<sup>41</sup> Carrie (1993), 105; e.g. Tac. *Hist.* 2.29.5, 37.2, 44.5, 45.6, 93.2).

<sup>42</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 4.4.

<sup>43</sup> App. *BC.* 1.117.

<sup>44</sup> Dio. 52.25.6.

<sup>45</sup> Dio. 52.27.5.

<sup>46</sup> Goldsworthy (2003), 78.

provincial societies furnished the army with legionaries of more prosperous origins, who ‘sought affiliation with the imperial power through military service.’<sup>47</sup> This may certainly apply to officers or prestigious auxiliary cohorts, but the common legionary was neither a particularly prestigious figure nor sufficiently remunerated to encourage many volunteers who could earn an equivalent living without enduring the rigours or geographical dislocation of military life.<sup>48</sup> Likewise, it is unlikely that the levels of literacy evinced by the private documents and letters to which Phang points are representative of most recruits; indeed, soldiers such as Julius Apollinaris, who immediately upon joining the army in Egypt in AD 107 was made a *librarius legionis* and exempted from stone-cutting alongside his fellow soldiers, suggest that good literacy was relatively exceptional.<sup>49</sup> The scornful opinions of Dio are obviously inflected with prejudice, but moral assumptions aside, the historic ideal of a propertied citizen soldier was no longer possible, and we ought to assume that the average legionary – for whom 900 sesterces per year (1,200 after AD 84) appeared an enticing sum – was not drawn from a particularly privileged social stratum. Recruited at a relatively young age (18-21), he likely saw no better prospects before him.<sup>50</sup> This we can recognise without supposing that recruits were ‘famished creatures who had no roots’,<sup>51</sup> whose military career entailed the life of a ‘poor wretch’,<sup>52</sup> as in Carrie’s straw man version.<sup>53</sup>

Although the imperial army had to rely on a relatively low social stratum to supply its rank and file, it was in many ways an exclusive organisation. The most obviously excluded group was slaves.<sup>54</sup> Besides the practical consideration that slaves might be less

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<sup>47</sup> Phang (2008), 78.

<sup>48</sup> See chapter 4.

<sup>49</sup> *P. Mich.* VIII 466.

<sup>50</sup> Le Bohec (1994), 73.

<sup>51</sup> Carrie (1993), 107.

<sup>52</sup> Carrie (1993), 120.

<sup>53</sup> The social and economic origins of recruits are further explored in chapter 4.

<sup>54</sup> Phang (2001), 289-91.

reliable in combat, the inclusion of slaves and freedmen among recruits would damage Augustus' intended image of the soldier as an 'honorable occupational status'.<sup>55</sup> A papyrus from the Fayoum, dated AD 92, preserves the declaration of the *optio* Titus Flavius Longus that he was a freeborn Roman citizen.<sup>56</sup> He provides three witnesses and asserts under oath that he has the 'right to serve in a legion' (*iusque militant[di in legione habere]*). Clearly, the suggestion that a non-freeborn man was serving as an *optio* caused considerable commotion – but even the discovery of two slaves within a batch of recruits (who had taken the oath of allegiance, though not yet enrolled in a unit) resulted in such consternation for Pliny that he wrote to Trajan himself.<sup>57</sup> In response, Trajan ordered Pliny to determine whether they were conscripts (*lecti*), in which case the recruiting officer ought to be punished; or substitutes (*vicarii*), in which case those who offered them are guilty; or if the slaves themselves had volunteered, in which case they were the ones to be punished (by execution).<sup>58</sup> Given that Pliny addresses Trajan with the regularity of a hungry child tugging at their parent's sleeve, one might argue that Pliny's referral of this minor incident to the emperor is not indicative of its gravity; but Pliny explicitly writes to Trajan as 'the founder and guarantor of military discipline' (*conditorem disciplinae militaris firmatoremque*),<sup>59</sup> and the integrity of the soldiery was ultimately the responsibility of the *imperator*.

Another aspect of the 'policy of quality'<sup>60</sup> was the initial examination, the *probatio*.<sup>61</sup> This was primarily a check of physical suitability, as described by Aristides.<sup>62</sup> Naturally, the *probatio* was not always sufficient to identify physical defects, or such

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<sup>55</sup> Phang (2008), 77.

<sup>56</sup> *CPL* 102.

<sup>57</sup> Plin. *Ep.* 10.29.

<sup>58</sup> Plin. *Ep.* 10.30.

<sup>59</sup> Plin. *Ep.* 10.29.1.

<sup>60</sup> Le Bohec (1994), 74.

<sup>61</sup> On which see Davies (1989), ch. 1.

<sup>62</sup> Aristides, *Eis Romanen* 26K.74-8.

defects could develop later; a papyrus from AD 52 records that one Tryphon was released from service for suffering from cataracts and impaired vision, as determined by an examination in Alexandria (we cannot know how long Tryphon had served for, or if this problem had developed during service rather than evading notice at the *probatio*).<sup>63</sup> Trajan had to clear up whether a man with one testicle was suitable for service, issuing a rescript that since Sulla and Cotta were said to have been 50% short themselves, a legionary might get by with only one.<sup>64</sup>

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of selectivity in legion composition – and a clear case of a deliberate ideologically-driven attempt to maintain a certain type of legionary – was the use of Italians to form the cores of legions across the empire. For instance, even while Spain was providing sufficient manpower to fill its own requirements and also send ‘excess’ recruits to Germany, Britain and Illyricum, a certain proportion of Italians was still being recruited into the Spanish legions. This, Mann explains, was a deliberate central policy ‘in order to maintain something of the legions’ original character.’<sup>65</sup> If Pliny’s *Panegyricus* is to be believed, Trajan even attempted to increase the Italian population in order to provide more recruits<sup>66</sup> (a policy which either failed, as Le Bohec claims, or else his successors were unconvinced of its necessity, as Hadrian made regional recruitment a more general practice).<sup>67</sup> Even when the legions all but ceased to draw on Italian manpower, the notion that legions were ‘Italian’ persisted into the third century AD, as new legions were always raised in Italy.<sup>68</sup>

Imperial recruitment, then, was not simply a matter of assembling any willing, able-bodied men; the legion was a manifestation of imperial power and had to correspond

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<sup>63</sup> *P. Oxy.* 39.

<sup>64</sup> *D.* 49.16.4.pr.

<sup>65</sup> Mann (1983), 51.

<sup>66</sup> Plin. *Pan.* 28.3-5.

<sup>67</sup> Le Bohec (1994), 81.

<sup>68</sup> Mann (1983), 63.

to certain ideals, retaining a core of Italian soldiers and strenuously excluding social undesirables. The exclusivity and imposition of certain standards in the recruitment process would also promote professional pride among the legionaries and enhance their sense of belonging to a selective institution. Likewise, the quality controls on legionary recruitment – however superficial – were important in justifying the privileges that legionaries possessed relative to the civilian population. The sense of identity which legionaries drew from belonging to the army, and to their particular sub-units, is a theme which will recur in this thesis, beginning in my first chapter on the primary group.

## Chapter 1: The Primary Group

In the following sections, we shall explore the individual's commitments to the various units and systems to which he belonged, dealing with each according to the compliance theory framework outlined above. As we have seen, primary group cohesion has dominated the study of combat motivation throughout the history of military sociology, to the point where many outsiders to the discipline effectively equate combat motivation studies with primary group theory. It is unsurprising, therefore, that many modern scholars have made a case for the importance of primary groups in the Roman army (usually identified with the eight-man *contubernia*);<sup>1</sup> but these claims have been based on an assumption of the small group's universal importance rather than a convincing identification from the ancient sources. We ought, therefore, to seek positive evidence. We shall investigate two questions: first, what evidence exists to indicate strong primary group affiliation in the Roman army? Secondly, what evidence exists to indicate that interpersonal relations (the means by which the primary group motivates its members) were important for combat motivation and cohesion? In relation to both these questions, we should also ask to what extent, if at all, the army deliberately fostered primary group relations. The answers to these questions have implications beyond issues of combat effectiveness or military organisation: they are fundamental to a discussion of social life and daily experience in the army.

Before exploring these questions, we must address certain criticisms of the notion of the primary group (indeed, 'cohesion' altogether) in ancient warfare, levelled by scholars including J. E. Lendon. Moving away from the 'tremendous psychological

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<sup>1</sup> MacMullen (1984); Goldsworthy (1996), 14, 257; Lee (1996), 209-10; James (1999), 17; McCall (2001), 82-3; Rankov (2007), 65; Cagniard (2007), 86.

importance' he had previously imputed to unit membership,<sup>2</sup> Lendon has recently argued that the case for cohesion is weak.<sup>3</sup> Lendon is correct to call attention to the lack of evidence for the importance of primary groups in ancient warfare, as well as criticisms of primary group theory in recent sociological discourse; but he goes further still, and argues that ancient authors' emphases on competition and rivalry contradict the notion that bonds of comradeship were important: 'A Roman unit was less like a modern family, and more like a modern professional sports team, whose members come together to compete against other teams, but whose members' feelings towards teammates are often more rivalrous than affectionate'.<sup>4</sup>

One wonders why these factors should not be considered mutually compatible (indeed, I will later argue that inter-unit competition can only be effective if the units' members feel meaningful attachment); nor do the examples Lendon furnishes succeed in disproving the importance of interpersonal bonds. The epitaphs of the *Equites Singulares Augusti*, which often have *equites* naming officers as heirs, are rightly interpreted as showing 'Not cohesion: good old Roman patronage';<sup>5</sup> but precisely because these epitaphs represent a particular practice of patronage rather than personal sentiment, we ought not consider them reflective of soldiers' emotional attachments. Anecdotes of individuals acting without concern for their fellows, such as one Artorius escaping from a burning building by jumping out onto a comrade who was killed in the process,<sup>6</sup> do not constitute a particularly persuasive class of evidence – and one might just as well point to incidents such as men interceding for their fellow soldiers whom Titus was threatening to execute for disobedience.<sup>7</sup> As for the clearly strong bonds between officers of different units,

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<sup>2</sup> Lendon (1997), 239.

<sup>3</sup> Lendon (2004); (2005), 254-6, 432.

<sup>4</sup> Lendon (2005), 255; (2004), 445.

<sup>5</sup> Lendon (2004), 446.

<sup>6</sup> Lendon (2005), 255; Joseph. *BJ.* 6.188-9.

<sup>7</sup> Joseph. *BJ.* 5.126-7.

which Lendon identifies both in the aforementioned epitaphs and in the military *collegia*, his conclusion that these suggest ‘that a Roman soldier did not feel any very strong attachment to the comrades with whom he actually fought’ does not follow at all.<sup>8</sup> Not only is it entirely possible that men of the same rank could be attached to one another across units without this undermining their commitment to their own, but as we shall later investigate, there was a strong degree of social separation between officers and common soldiers. Besides, ordinary *milites* were barred from forming *collegia*, suggesting that the authorities thought a soldier’s loyalties should be to his established units.<sup>9</sup>

Some classicists have also pointed to the recent emergence of the concept of ‘task cohesion’ in military sociology, which stresses the centrality of professional competence and commitment to task-related goals for military effectiveness, as opposed to social cohesion.<sup>10</sup> This, however, is not a convincing criticism when applied to ancient warfare: for task cohesion to effectively replace interpersonal bonds requires a level of professionalisation and training unique to the past few decades of modern warfare. Anthony King, one of the most interesting writers on this subject, explains that modern soldiers respond to combat situations by defining their predicament and then reacting according to an appropriate pre-prepared battle drill.<sup>11</sup> In contrast to the citizen-conscript armies used throughout most of the twentieth century, in which groups of soldiers under fire relied on aggressive leaders to create forward momentum, modern soldiers are trained to the point where combat consists of the execution of a commonly-understood plan, requiring not individual initiative but strict adherence to professional practice, and thus affection or interpersonal commitment are not as important as competence and mutual comprehension. As King rightly argues, this professional soldier who can cope with the

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<sup>8</sup> Lendon (2004), 446.

<sup>9</sup> *Dig.* 47.22.1; Ginsburg (1940), 150-1; Campbell (1994), 136-7; Pegler (2000), 39-40.

<sup>10</sup> Armstrong (2016).

<sup>11</sup> King (2013).

stresses of combat by automatically reproducing elements of drill is a thoroughly modern phenomenon, and although the Roman professional soldier may have been trained to the point of instinctual response so far as camp or bridge construction were concerned,<sup>12</sup> his combat training was insufficient to alter his conception of combat in this way.<sup>13</sup> Nor are there any indications in our sources that Roman soldiers were supposed to conceive of combat as fulfilling a procedure; rather, battle was considered in moral terms, soldiers were exhorted to show courage and aggression, and whereas modern qualms about the morality of warfare have necessitated that the modern soldier understand combat in the sterile terms of professional task completion, the ancient soldier could see glory in slaughter.

Task cohesion has been greatly emphasised in recent sociological literature on modern military forces because of its role in debates about integrating women, homosexuals, and individuals of non-typical sexual/gender orientations into the military; if cohesion does not rely on affectionate bonds between essentially similar individuals, this removes one argument against a more heterogenous military.<sup>14</sup> But the concept of task cohesion is to be located firmly within the historically peculiar context of today's intensively-trained soldiery, and its applicability to ancient military forces seems highly tenuous. Lendon's attempts to put interpersonal bonds out of the picture are also unconvincing. As any football fan knows, the internally conflicted sports team in Lendon's analogy would in fact be an ineffective sports team; a harmonious dressing room is essential for good performances, and even if its members are also concerned with their own achievements and careers, individual indulgence at the expense of the team is often condemned. We have no reasons at this stage to discount the possibility of primary group

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<sup>12</sup> Dio 71.3; Davies (1989), 126.

<sup>13</sup> See chapter 5.

<sup>14</sup> MacCoun and Hix (2010).

bonds – but we must go beyond the assumption that they must have been important, and test the evidence.

We begin with the *contubernium*, often identified as a primary group directly analogous to a modern infantry squad<sup>15</sup> (though other scholars such as Speidel have claimed it as ‘the basic practical and morale-building unit of the Roman army’ without any explicit reference to modern primary group theory).<sup>16</sup> Very little is truly known about the *contubernium*. That eight men shared a tent (and, in more permanent forts, a barrack block) is known from the *De Munitionibus Castrorum*,<sup>17</sup> and is well-attested archaeologically.<sup>18</sup> It has been suggested that the *contubernium* may itself have had a leader, possibly an *immunis*;<sup>19</sup> but given that *contubernia* were not allocated separate tasks (and Josephus, describing the distribution of daily tasks down the command chain, stops at the centurions),<sup>20</sup> there is no reason why the *contubernium* should have had a formal commander.

There is no evidence for *contubernia* having any tactical functions.<sup>21</sup> Rather it seems that the subdivision was a matter of logistical organisation, with each *contubernium* carrying its own tent, tools, and cooking equipment,<sup>22</sup> and eating together<sup>23</sup> – at Masada, for instance, each *contubernium* seems to have constructed for itself a *triclinium* of earth and stones.<sup>24</sup> Haynes is surely correct to suggest that cooking and eating together would have increased the bonds between *contubernales*.<sup>25</sup> The term *concibones* (fellow-diners) is attested only once, on the epitaph of a German soldier in Africa, but nicely evokes the

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<sup>15</sup> ‘Squad’: e.g. Keppie (1984), 173; Roth (1999), 19.

<sup>16</sup> Speidel (1992), 19; Cagniat (2007), 86.

<sup>17</sup> *De. Mun. Castr.* 1.

<sup>18</sup> Von Petrikovits (1975), 36-43.

<sup>19</sup> Goldsworthy (1996), 14.

<sup>20</sup> Joseph. *BJ.* 3.87.

<sup>21</sup> Isaac (1995), 30.

<sup>22</sup> Roth (1999), 77-8; Haynes (2013), 187-8.

<sup>23</sup> Roth (1999), 54-5.

<sup>24</sup> Richmond (1962), 146.

<sup>25</sup> Haynes (2013), 188.

association between comradeship and mutual dining.<sup>26</sup>

In literature, the term *contubernalis* is predominantly found with no relation to military matters, referring simply to intimate companionship (though of course, the term is borrowed from the military sphere). It was used to refer to members of an officer's staff,<sup>27</sup> or even to mean 'fellow-slave';<sup>28</sup> Tacitus also uses *contubernium* as a term for a friendly relationship when describing relations between soldiers and civilians in Antioch.<sup>29</sup> According to Tacitus, Otho (emulating Nero) would call soldiers his *contubernales* when attempting to court their goodwill,<sup>30</sup> an affectation similar to the imperial habit of referring to soldiers as *commilitones*.<sup>31</sup> Certainly, the fact that the term migrated to civilian use attests to the notion that tent-mates' bonds were thought to be particularly strong, such as in Cicero's explanation of his deep bond with Lucius Tubero developing as a result of their time as *militiae contubernales*;<sup>32</sup> but of course, these two men (like nearly all the subjects of literary references to military *contubernia*) were far from ordinary legionaries.<sup>33</sup>

There is only one clear literary reference to the importance of *contubernales* for combat motivation, from an incident in the *Bellum Alexandrinum*, when Julius Caesar's men fought a naval battle in the harbour of Alexandria against a local fleet. The text describes Caesar's men going to battle thus:

It was by these arguments that every man, as he escorted his *contubernalis*, friend or acquaintance, implored him not to fall short of the esteem with which not only

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<sup>26</sup> *CIL* VIII, 9060; Adams (2003), 279.

<sup>27</sup> E.g. Cic. *Fam.* 5.20.7.

<sup>28</sup> Plaut. *Mil.* 2.2.29.

<sup>29</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 2.80.3; Haynes (2013), 157-8.

<sup>30</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 1.23.

<sup>31</sup> Suet. *Iul.* 67, Aug. 25; see chapter 3.

<sup>32</sup> Cic. *Lig.* 7.21.

<sup>33</sup> Nissinen (2012), 18-19.

he held him, but all those others likewise, by whose acclamation he was now going forth as one of the chosen combatants.

*Eadem suum quisque contubernalem, amicum, notum prosequens erat obtestatus, ne suam atque omnium falleret opinionem, quorum iudicio delectus ad pugnam proficisceretur.*<sup>34</sup>

Although this was a naval battle, these are clearly legionaries participating in the naval fight:<sup>35</sup> the battle in the harbour was so congested that it was a matter of melee combat, not sailing skill,<sup>36</sup> and these men were specifically selected (*delectus*). Interpersonal relations are clearly important in this passage, with *contubernales*, friends and acquaintances encouraging one another. However, it seems that here men have been selected to fight individually, outside of their primary groups – suggesting that Caesar did not take care to maintain these groups in combat. Nevertheless, this specific example concerns a peculiar type of engagement, for which men might have been selected who were deemed to be particularly suited to fighting on ships, and one observes strong interpersonal bonds among the men regardless of the general's decisions.

Turning to the epigraphic record, one finds many more instances of the term *contubernalis* referring specifically to legionaries (although, as with literature, the vast majority of instances refer to intimate friends in civilian contexts, or to the pseudo-spouses of slaves). However, Lendon has shown that in military inscriptions, the term need not refer to members of the same *contubernium*: citing *AE* 1916, 47 (different *centuriae*) and *CIL* III 433 (different legions), Lendon concludes that '*Contubernalis* can safely be translated no more exactly than "comrade-in-arms".<sup>37</sup> This is indisputable – and one might

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<sup>34</sup> *B. Alex.* 16 (trans. Way).

<sup>35</sup> Cf. *Caes. BG.* 3.14,

<sup>36</sup> *B. Alex.* 15.

<sup>37</sup> Lendon (2006), 270-1.

add examples of ‘*contubernales*’ setting up tombstones for men identified as *milites classis* (so far as we know, the fleet was not organised into *contubernia*).<sup>38</sup> Haynes’ claim that *contubernalis* ‘is most generally understood in its sense as tent-mate’ is thus not at all secure.<sup>39</sup>

These conclusions should also be taken to apply to evidence such as soldiers’ letters,<sup>40</sup> although context occasionally suggests that actual tent-mates or at least soldiers serving in the same location are meant, such as the Vindolanda letter which greets five named men plus *omn[es] [c]ontibernales cum quibus [o]pto felicissimus vivas*.<sup>41</sup> In Julius Apollinarius’ letter to his father in AD 107, Julius reports that several men send greetings to his father, along with *[o]i κοντ[ουβε]ρ[ν]άριοι πάντες* – a straightforward transliteration of the Latin term.<sup>42</sup> Speidel notes that Julius’ salutation to his father’s *κολλήγας* (another word borrowed from Latin military terminology) means that his father, Julius Sabinus, must have been a soldier too – and indeed, a contract found in his house confirms that he was a soldier of *legio III Cyrenaica*.<sup>43</sup>

We are thus forced to admit that there is little viable evidence for the *contubernium* as a vital primary group or locus of loyalty for soldiers (in light of our considerations, we might also reconsider *B. Alex.* 16 and suggest that *contubernalis* here might simply be equivalent to the following word *amicus*, perhaps with more military connotations). Of course, it is an entirely reasonable assumption that tent-mates became emotionally close, as they slept and ate together. Moreover, the lack of epigraphic evidence for these groups is unsurprising given that soldiers would wish to identify themselves within larger, more formal structures (indeed, modern soldiers rarely identify themselves by squad or section);

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<sup>38</sup> E.g. *AE* 1976, 744.

<sup>39</sup> Haynes (2013), 334.

<sup>40</sup> *Contra* Bowman and Thomas (1983), 153.

<sup>41</sup> *Tab. Vindol.* 346.

<sup>42</sup> *P. Mich.* 466.

<sup>43</sup> *P. Mich.* 571; Speidel (1977), 692.

the cost of setting up an inscription could be prohibitive for such a small unit alone;<sup>44</sup> and possibly, so far as *genii* are concerned, a *contubernium* of ordinary soldiers was not considered an appropriate recipient of patronage from a *genius*.<sup>45</sup> But beyond reasonable assumption, the evidence does not explicitly attest that *contubernia* were crucial for combat motivation, especially as they possessed no tactical role. Perhaps the strongest indication that *contubernales* commonly had very close relationships is the very fact that the term was so associated with intimacy that it gained wide usage outside of the military.

Modern literature on the primary group does most commonly refer to groups of around ten men, but we ought to consider primary groups of a larger size, particularly as the modern infantry squad is tactically relevant in a way which no ancient group of equivalent size ever was.<sup>46</sup> How large might a group be while still retaining the features of frequent face-to-face interaction, intimacy, and emotional co-dependency which characterise a primary group? Anna Walas, in a paper applying social network theory to the Roman army, has suggested that Robin Dunbar's cognitive limit of 150 people with whom an individual can maintain regular personal contact would mean that for Roman soldiers, 'a couple of *centuriae* could have been a fairly real cognitive boundary'.<sup>47</sup> Given that 'regular personal contact' for Dunbar means only weekly or monthly interaction, we ought to scale his number down slightly when talking about a strongly-knit group rather than a social network. A single *centuria* of 80 men seems reasonable, especially as the members of a *centuria* would likely have interacted with one another on a daily basis ('men who knew each other's names and faces, who labored, ate, and slept in close proximity and who took their communal identity from their centurion').<sup>48</sup> In World War II, American companies of

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<sup>44</sup> Lendon (2004), 446.

<sup>45</sup> Haynes (2013), 221.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Harris (2006), 304-5.

<sup>47</sup> Walas (2015), 25; Dunbar (2010).

<sup>48</sup> Levithan (2013), 27.

up to 250 men could be described as the soldier's 'major psychological group'; the 30-man platoon has been called the 'real world' of the British soldier.<sup>49</sup> *Centuriae* would rarely have their full complement of 80 men in any case:<sup>50</sup> the duty roster of the *centuria* from *legio III Cyrenaica* showed the unit at around 50% strength;<sup>51</sup> the tent arrangements at Masada suggest 200-300 men per cohort<sup>52</sup> (and so 33-50 men per *centuria*); while at Pharsalus, Caesar had an average of 46 men per *centuria*<sup>53</sup> (see also chapter 8 of this thesis, which explores the extent to which units were fragmented).

The 80-man *centuria* was the smallest significant unit in the army.<sup>54</sup> Very little has been written about this subdivision, outside of the extensive literature on the centurion *Rangordnung*. The *centuria* is mentioned far less often in literature than the cohort – a reflection, of course, not of individual soldiers' loyalties, but rather the greater tactical relevance of the cohort. Certainly, there are no literary indications of *centuriae* being used as independent tactical units on the battlefield in our period. The *centuria* was, like the *contubernium*, primarily a logistical and administrative sub-unit, with the centurion and the three *principales* to oversee the unit's records. All the unit rosters collected by Fink (1971) list their men by *centuriae* (or *turmae*, in the case of cavalrymen).<sup>55</sup> In Josephus' description of the morning salutation, orders are given by *centuriae*, with the soldiers reporting to their centurions;<sup>56</sup> and it must be to *centuriae* that Josephus refers when he says the Romans encamp, take water, and eat *κατὰ συντάξεις*.<sup>57</sup> All the Vindolanda *renuntia* (morning reports) which are sufficiently legible state that the reports were made by the

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<sup>49</sup> Kellett (1982), 44-5.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Goldsworthy (1996), 21-4.

<sup>51</sup> Fink, *RMR* 9, 58.

<sup>52</sup> Hawkes (1929), 210.

<sup>53</sup> Caes. *BC*. 3.89 (22,000 legionaries/80 cohorts = 275 men per cohort, 46 per century).

<sup>54</sup> Webster (1985), 109; Isaac (1995), 30.

<sup>55</sup> Fink (1971), 10.

<sup>56</sup> Joseph. *BJ*. 3.87.

<sup>57</sup> Joseph. *BJ*. 3.85-6.

*optiones*, and therefore also attest inspection at the centurial level.<sup>58</sup>

Speidel has suggested that *centuriae* might still be paired into maniples for tactical purposes in the imperial army (plainly, maniples had no administrative role, as they are not mentioned in inscriptions or papyri).<sup>59</sup> Le Bohec has even claimed that the maniple was the most important tactical unit in the imperial army.<sup>60</sup> However, there is no good reason to reject the orthodox opinion that the maniple no longer played any significant role in the imperial army;<sup>61</sup> nor do the pairs of *centuriae* on a building stone<sup>62</sup> and an imperial dedication<sup>63</sup> provide sufficient justification even for Speidel's cautious statement that 'one would like to think that in the battle-line the *posteriores* backed up the *priores*.'<sup>64</sup> The term *commanipularis* (or *commanipulus*, *commanuculus*, or *manipularis*) in imperial-era inscriptions is, as Lendon has shown, to be understood to refer to members of one's own *centuria*,<sup>65</sup> such as in one dedication of an *optio* to his unit's *genius centuriae* on behalf of his *commanipulares*.<sup>66</sup> There is a single instance of the term *commanipularis* in the literary record, when Tacitus writes that terrified Vitellian soldiers, believing their executions to be imminent, threw themselves upon the breasts of their *commanipulares* (here perhaps just meaning 'comrades', or more interestingly, using a term that literally evokes touch to describe soldiers clinging to their comrades' necks);<sup>67</sup> similarly, at Pharsalus the Caesarian centurion Crastinus exhorted *manipulares mei*.<sup>68</sup>

One presumes that *centuriae* marched together (Tacitus' description of Vitellius' march into Rome is the only direct evidence, in which each centurion stands beside his

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<sup>58</sup> *Tab. Vindol.* II. 127, 128, 129, 137, 138, 148, III. 574, 578; cf. Haynes (2015), 115.

<sup>59</sup> Speidel (1992), 9-10.

<sup>60</sup> Le Bohec (1994), 142.

<sup>61</sup> Keppie (1984), 173-4; Parker (1928), 27-9.

<sup>62</sup> *RIB* 2032.

<sup>63</sup> *IDR* II, 327.

<sup>64</sup> Speidel (1992), 10.

<sup>65</sup> Lendon (2006), 272-4.

<sup>66</sup> *AE* 1986, 532.

<sup>67</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 4.46.

<sup>68</sup> Caes. *BC.* 3.91.1-2.

*centuria*).<sup>69</sup> Although the men mostly ate in their *contubernia*, mills were usually owned by an entire *centuria*; Haynes notes only one hand mill has been found belonging to a *contubernium*,<sup>70</sup> with many more marked as belonging to a *centuria*.<sup>71</sup> At Inchtuthil, the remains suggest that each centurial barrack block had its own oven.<sup>72</sup>

A great deal of labour seems to have been organised by *centuriae*: duty rosters such as that of *legio III Cyrenaica* describe the distribution of duties among members of a single *centuria*.<sup>73</sup> However, while at least twelve men are detailed to work within their own *centuria* in this (partly damaged) document, at least 18 other entries detail men to work with other *centuriae*; clearly, plenty of soldiers would have spent a great deal of time associating with soldiers of other units.<sup>74</sup> A tablet from Vindolanda which refers to the work done by the *fabri* of the *centuria Firmi* suggests again that at least some work was delegated to specific *centuriae*,<sup>75</sup> though the quantity of work here is such that the three *fabri* must have been overseers rather than doing all the labour.<sup>76</sup> Naturally, labour could be organised by cohort or legion as the task required, but it is by *centuria* that duty rosters identify soldiers.<sup>77</sup> An increasing tendency to brigade men from two *centuriae* together for work has been interpreted as an attempt to stimulate competition between units – if true, a good instance of group solidarity being deliberately harnessed.<sup>78</sup> Davies has similarly suggested that the practice camps at Llandridnod Common and Dolddinas are the results of individual *centuriae* competing against one another.<sup>79</sup>

Speidel has gone so far as to declare that the *centuria* was the unit ‘with which the

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<sup>69</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 2.89.

<sup>70</sup> *CIL* XIII, 11954a.

<sup>71</sup> Haynes (2013), 179 n. 84.

<sup>72</sup> Pitts and St. Joseph (1985), 200.

<sup>73</sup> Fink, *RMR* 9.

<sup>74</sup> Fink (1971), 112.

<sup>75</sup> *Tab. Vindol.* 862.

<sup>76</sup> Bowman et al. (2011), 211.

<sup>77</sup> MacMullen (1984), 446.

<sup>78</sup> Speidel (1992), 31-3.

<sup>79</sup> Davies (1989), 136.

soldiers identified above all',<sup>80</sup> citing his own research on the cults of the *genii*.<sup>81</sup> Though the evidence is complicated, it seems that almost all the sub-units of the Roman army possessed their own *genii*, but by far the largest number of chapels, altars and statues are dedicated to the *genius centuriae*, 'obviously because the soldiers attached to their *centuriae* the strongest feeling of identity and sense of belonging.'<sup>82</sup> Given the inscriptions' lack of verbosity, one might hesitate to draw such a definitive conclusion about the soldiers' emotional attachments, or the conclusion that 'it was their *centuria* the men wanted to see protected most of all'; religious or dedicatory conventions need not reflect personal sentiments in this way. Most commonly an officer (an *optio*,<sup>83</sup> a *signifer*,<sup>84</sup> a *tesserarius*,<sup>85</sup> a *custos armorum*,<sup>86</sup> or a *centurio* himself<sup>87</sup>) was the dedicator, and it is impossible to know whether self-promotion or professional concerns had a part to play beyond sentiment.

Nevertheless, the prevalence of the cults of *genii centuriarum* does attest that these units were revered and had tangible identities. The chapels of the *genii* at Lambaesis were located by the units' barracks,<sup>88</sup> and at Niederbieber, all the dedications to the centurial *genii* were located in the accommodation areas;<sup>89</sup> such dedications would therefore have been prevalent in the intimate, everyday spaces of centurial life. One cannot imagine that the soldiers thought about their *centuriae* blandly as organisational units.

On tombstones, it is the norm for soldiers to identify themselves by *centuria* (rather than cohort); in a 1982 paper, Speidel could only find, among hundreds of funerary

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<sup>80</sup> Speidel (1992), 19; cf. MacMullen (1984), 446; Goldsworthy (1996), 256-7; Haynes (1999), 11; Goldsworthy (1999), 201.

<sup>81</sup> Speidel and Dimitrova-Mileva (1978).

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 1544-6.

<sup>83</sup> E.g. *CIL* VII, 166.

<sup>84</sup> E.g. *CIL* III, 10402.

<sup>85</sup> E.g. *CIL* III, 3422.

<sup>86</sup> E.g. *CIL* XIII, 6680.

<sup>87</sup> E.g. *CIL* XIII, 6682.

<sup>88</sup> Cagnat (1908), 55.

<sup>89</sup> Stoll (2001), 167.

inscriptions, four which identify a soldier by his cohort instead of his *centuria*.<sup>90</sup> The epigraphic records of centurial affiliation almost always refer to the *centuria* using the name of its centurion in the genitive, e.g. *L(ucius) Cassius / Cla(udia) Alban/us Aeq(uiculis) mil(es) / leg(ionis) XV Apo(llinaris) / |(centuria) Salvi Mar/celli*,<sup>91</sup> though occasionally – mainly in the third century – *centuriae* were named according to cohort and rank, e.g. *Aurel(ius) Alexandrus quandam signifer leg(ionis) II Traianae For(tis) Ger(manica) coh(ortis) II hastati pr(ioris)*.<sup>92</sup> The centurial stones of Hadrian’s wall, stating which century erected a stone, also identify centuries by their commanders, sometimes mentioning cohorts as additional information.<sup>93</sup>

There are also several graffiti in which a soldier chooses to identify himself by *centuria*. Most graffiti including unit identifications follow similar formulae to formal inscriptions, e.g. *Sex(tus) Decimius Rufus / [miles] coh(ortis) V pr(aetoriana) ((centuria)) Martialis*.<sup>94</sup> A particular delight is a graffito from Pompeii which reads *C(aius) Valerius Venustus, m(iles) c(o)h(ortis) I pr(aetoria) ((centuria)) Rufi, fututor maximum*,<sup>95</sup> with the acclamation as ‘greatest fucker’ presented as if it were some official rank (although another hand appears to have inserted the letters UL so that *fututor* reads *futututor* – ‘little fucker’). It could be argued that soldiers’ desire to mention their *centuriae* in graffiti attests to these units being a strong part of their identities (ancient graffiti-writing was often a way to ‘make one’s mark’ and identify an individual’s presence – hence the choice of inscribed information is highly personal); but equally, these informal inscriptions could be deliberately emulating the formal inscriptions in which identification with *centuriae* is the norm. All the same, it is surely the case that these scribblers had internalised their centurial

<sup>90</sup> Speidel (1982), 854: *CIL* III, 7396; *AE* 1976, 640; *CIL* III, 11221; *AE* 1951, 194.

<sup>91</sup> *CIL* III, 14358.

<sup>92</sup> *CIL* III, 6592. See Speidel (1990); cf. Speidel (1983); Bruun (1988).

<sup>93</sup> E.g. RIB 1859: *coh(ortis) VI centuria Lousi Suavis*.

<sup>94</sup> *CIL* IV, 1994.

<sup>95</sup> *CIL* IV, 2145.

affiliation as an important part of their identity.

When Petronius' Encolpius, dressed as a soldier, encounters another soldier on the street, he is immediately asked from which legion and century he hails: '*Quid tu... commilito, ex qua legione es aut cuius centuria?*'<sup>96</sup> *Cuius*, of course, anticipates an answer in the form of the centurion's name, indicating that this formula observed in epigraphy and formal records reflects colloquial use. The author had no direct military experience, so far as we know (I concur with the identification of Petronius with the character of Tac. *Ann.* 16.18,<sup>97</sup> which mentions only that he was proconsul of Bithynia and later consul; Bithynia, being a public non-border province, lacked a large military garrison), but it is almost certain that Petronius would have experienced the presence of soldiers, and his text probably reflects a common conversational opener between soldiers witnessed in civilian society. Of course, as one is reminded by Walas' research, it would be entirely possible for two soldiers from the same legion to meet without knowing one another.<sup>98</sup>

In sum, there is greater evidence for soldiers being strongly attached to their *centuriae* than their *contubernia*, though one might reasonably continue to imagine that the small groups of tent-mates were more affectionate than *centuriae* – and we should understand that tent groups naturally left little evidence compared to formal units. Indeed, although a *centuria* contained a sufficiently small number of men for its soldiers to be bound by a network of strong interpersonal bonds, we ought to consider that an individual could also relate to his *centuria* as an abstract entity in a way which was not possible for *contubernia*, hence the relative proliferation of epigraphic material attesting centurial attachment. It is unfortunate that *centuriae*, like *contubernia*, are mentioned very infrequently in the literary sources, Latin or indeed Greek – Josephus, whose specific term

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<sup>96</sup> Petr. 82.

<sup>97</sup> See Courtney (2001), 5-11.

<sup>98</sup> Walas (2014), 21-2.

for *centuria* is *ἐκατονταρχία*, only makes two uses of the term in near-identical contexts: men being chosen *ἀφ' ἐκάστης ἐκατονταρχίας*.<sup>99</sup>

The evidence for the extent to which soldiers identified with, or were motivated by bonds to, their *contubernia* or *centuriae* is certainly suggestive. Let us consider the importance of interpersonal bonds more generally. The term *commilito* (fellow-soldier) is relatively frequent in inscriptions and literature. Like *contubernalis*, it is used of men of much higher rank than ordinary fighting legionaries (Seneca calls Julius Caesar's assassins his *commilitones*, for instance).<sup>100</sup> Lendon has argued that the term is most commonly used in inscriptions to refer to soldiers of some organisational distance, in different *centuriae*, cohorts, or legions.<sup>101</sup> But it is also used to describe legionaries close to one another: when a brawl broke out between legionaries and Batavian auxiliaries in AD 69, Tacitus describes the belligerents being surrounded by their *commilitones* (*sui cuique commilitones adgregati*), suggesting groups of men willing to protect one another.<sup>102</sup> Many of the tombstones set up by a soldier's comrade use the term, sometimes with a superlative adjective such as *optimus*<sup>103</sup> or *obsequentissimus*.<sup>104</sup>

A question one is keen to ask – though as ever, the evidence is unsatisfactory – is to what extent recruits were concentrated together in *contubernia* and *centuriae*, as opposed to being dispersed among pre-existing units. As I have noted, the logistical functions of *contubernia* make it likely that amalgamation or reinforcement occurred so as to maintain complements as near to eight men as possible. As for *centuriae*, there is no evidence for a legion ever lacking its proper number of *centuriae*, regardless of manpower. It is probable,

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<sup>99</sup> Joseph. *BJ*. 3.117, 6.131.

<sup>100</sup> Sen. *Ira*. 3.30.5.

<sup>101</sup> Lendon (2006), 274-6.

<sup>102</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 2.66.

<sup>103</sup> *AE* 2006, 1684.

<sup>104</sup> *CIL* III 3558.

then, that new recruits were distributed among depleted *centuriae* and thus mingled with existing men.

An interesting document is a set of receipts for the Cohors I Lusitanorum, dated to AD 117.<sup>105</sup> These receipts record the deposit of the remainder of the recruits' travel expenses with the *signiferi* of each *centuria*, who then addressed their receipts to the cohort's *centurio princeps*. Gilliam<sup>106</sup> and Fink<sup>107</sup> have noted the large number of recruits (126 in total, when no more than 25-30 should have been required in a normal year), and suggested that the unit suffered high casualties in the Jewish revolt of AD 115-117. The soldiers are distributed quite evenly among the *centuriae*: batches of 20, 17, 20, 22, 24, and 23. We can only presume that the recipient *centuriae* had correspondingly even deficiencies.

We might also seek evidence among the epigraphic examples of the term *contirones* (alternatively *contirunculus*). Very little has been written about this, although Speidel has examined one dedication<sup>108</sup> made by Cilician soldiers identifying themselves as *contirones* recruited in AD 196.<sup>109</sup> For Speidel, this joint dedication, made some ten to fifteen years after the men were recruited, attests to a persistent group identity deriving from their experiences as co-recruits. Another inscription studied by Speidel is the gravestone of one Sextus Iulius Iulianus, a tribune who died while leading 1,000 Thracian recruits to Mauretania Tingitana.<sup>110</sup> These recruits were most likely sent to supplement existing units of the Tingitanian army, rather than form their own, as no Thracian unit is known in the area.

There are more examples suggesting bonds between *contirones* (a term for which,

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<sup>105</sup> Fink, *RMR* 74.

<sup>106</sup> Gilliam (1966), 94-7.

<sup>107</sup> Fink (1971), 277-8.

<sup>108</sup> *AE* 1990, 854.

<sup>109</sup> Speidel (1989a).

<sup>110</sup> *CIL* VIII, 9381.

it should be noted, there are no indications of simply becoming a generic term of affection like *contubernalis*, rather than specifying men recruited together). For example, the gravestone of one centurion was set up by both his *heredes et contirones*,<sup>111</sup> possibly these were the same people, as in one tombstone where a Sergius Tertius seems to be both *contiro* and *heres* of the deceased.<sup>112</sup> On another gravestone, the dedicator calls himself *contirunculus* (possibly *contirunculus optimus*) and *contubernalis pientissimus* of the deceased.<sup>113</sup> The inclusion of epithets usually reserved for family members is significant – particularly as the inclusion of these terms was not mandated by epigraphic conventions (many gravestones do not include them) – and points to the firm establishment of the pseudo-familial support relationships which are key to primary group bonding. A very poignant example is a gravestone for a child who died at the age of one year, eleven months and twenty days, and was commemorated by his *pater et contirones eius*.<sup>114</sup> We can imagine these men providing emotional support for the grieving father; their sympathy and solidarity is certainly evinced by the mutual funding of the gravestone.

If batches of recruits were kept together in the same *centuriae*, the Roman battle-line would have consisted of units made up of men who had been together for years of service, giving them time to establish bonds of trust and affection. Mutual emotional support would have been particularly strong as the soldiers experienced the initial, disorienting introduction to military life together. With batches of recruits being summoned from similar areas, like the Cilician *contirones* above, the linguistic, ethnic and cultural ties of these groups would have been a source of solidarity and comfort within the new environment, and might have further encouraged soldiers to focus their attention on their own *contubernia* or *centuriae*.

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<sup>111</sup> *CIL* VI 2676.

<sup>112</sup> *AE* 1993, 309.

<sup>113</sup> *CIL* III, 8124.

<sup>114</sup> *Documenta Albana* II, 5.

Carrie has claimed that the frequency with which the term ‘brother’ is mentioned on epitaphs, despite funerary honours not usually being a responsibility of a brother, points to a deliberate army policy of stationing family members ‘in the same unit or at least in the same camp.’<sup>115</sup> Although Carrie does not provide any examples, one can find over a hundred examples of military personnel being commemorated by *fratres*. However, *frater* was a generic term of affectionate address, both in military and civilian contexts, and like *contubernalis* could possess either a literal or figurative meaning, making it unclear whether most of these epithets refer to actual relatives<sup>116</sup> – though the fact that these men liked to think of themselves as a ‘band of brothers’ is itself significant for cohesion.<sup>117</sup>

In addition, in most of these epitaphs, the commemorating *fratres* do not identify themselves as soldiers. This does not preclude the possibility that they were – but given the usual keenness of soldiers to mention their occupation and units, the omission would be noteworthy; and indeed, there are examples where *fratres* do mention their status as soldiers, e.g. *Antonio mil(iti) leg(ionis) III A Jug(ustae) / |(centuria) Sextili vixit ann(os) / XLIV mil(itavit) ann(os) XXV / h(ic) s(itus) e(st) / M(arcus) Antonius mil(es) leg(ionis) XXI / |(centuria) Valeri Prisci frater / posuit.*<sup>118</sup> Note also that these two men served in different legions. Another soldier and *frater* makes sure to mention his military status when commemorating a civilian: *M(arcus) Munatius / M(arci) f(ilius) Scap(tia) / Etruscus / Florentinus / vixit ann(os) XIIX / Q(uintus) Munatius / mil(es) c(o)hor(tis) VII pr(aetoriae) / frater posuit.*<sup>119</sup>

There is a little non-epigraphic evidence for brothers serving alongside one another. Onasander, whose treatise was based on Roman practice, recommends stationing ἀδελφοὺς

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<sup>115</sup> Carrie (1993), 113.

<sup>116</sup> Dickey (2002), 119-26.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. Birley (2002).

<sup>118</sup> *AE* 1912, 206.

<sup>119</sup> *CIL* V, 925.

παρ' ἀδελφοῖς, φίλους παρὰ φίλοις, ἐραστὰς παρὰ παιδικοῖς.<sup>120</sup> The reference to ἐραστὰς παρὰ παιδικοῖς marks this out as a distinctively Greek piece of advice, especially given the less forgiving attitude towards passive homosexuality within the context of Roman sexuality.<sup>121</sup> There are literary references to brothers in combat together, such as a man called Longus who, trapped in Jerusalem, was exhorted by his brother Cornelius to kill himself rather than surrender.<sup>122</sup> But truly, there is insufficient evidence for Carrie's suggestion that family members would be deliberately placed together – and the coincidences of brothers serving together more likely stems from the fact that men from the same recruiting areas would usually be posted to the same legions. In fact, one of the Vindonissa tablets seems to reveal two brothers, or otherwise closely related men, but – so far as one can make out from the damaged text – they served in different *centuriae* (one *centuria* is that of Proculus; the name of the other centurion is missing except for the final letters *is*, suggesting a different, third-declension name).<sup>123</sup>

The clearest indication of whether interpersonal bonds were thought to be generally important would be if commanders ensured the integrity of sub-units on campaign, taking efforts to keep comrades together. Unfortunately, there is very little evidence with which to test this notion. Goldsworthy argues that Caesar, who notes that his men fought well at the Sambre<sup>124</sup> and in Britain in 55<sup>125</sup> despite being formed up at random rather than in their proper units, indicates that men were not expected to be as effective away from the fellow-soldiers to whom they were accustomed.<sup>126</sup> In one assault on Jerusalem, when the terrain prohibited the entire army from attacking, Titus selected the 30 most suitable men from

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<sup>120</sup> Onasander 24.

<sup>121</sup> Phang (2001), 278-95.

<sup>122</sup> Joseph. *BJ*. 6.186-7.

<sup>123</sup> *Tab. Vindon.* 28.

<sup>124</sup> Caes. *BG.* 2.21.

<sup>125</sup> Caes. *BG.* 4.26.

<sup>126</sup> Goldsworthy (1996), 257.

each *centuria* – perhaps simply a convenient way of selecting a force (no doubt the centurions were instructed to make the selections), but perhaps also recognising that men fought best beside those they were accustomed to serving with.<sup>127</sup> Generally, however, these sorts of details are rarely included by our authors, and given that a battle-line would be formed by legions, men were surely stationed within their proper units in nearly all circumstances anyway.

Another contextual factor we ought to consider is the level of activity across legions. Much of the explanation for the strength of primary group bonds points to the highly stressful nature of the military environment, and the soldier's heightened requirement for primary need satisfaction that results.<sup>128</sup> As Stanley Schachter argued, threat produces anxiety, and anxiety produces a desire to affiliate; the intensification of the threat thus increases the affiliative desire.<sup>129</sup> Therefore we should naturally expect cohesion to have been higher in more active legions, serving in highly stressful environments. Two further considerations, which will be discussed in later chapters, are the isolation of military life from the civilian world, and the opportunities for socialisation with non-military personnel.<sup>130</sup>

### Conclusion

One modern scholar writes that 'Small-group loyalties of the kind that are now regarded as crucial to military morale remain a mystery. Are they rarely visible because our sources simply did not know what was happening among the lower ranks, or because Roman warfare, characterized by the long lines of men typical of the age before explosives and

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<sup>127</sup> Joseph. *BJ.* 6.131

<sup>128</sup> Cf. Shils and Janowitz (1948), 289-91.

<sup>129</sup> Schachter (1959).

<sup>130</sup> Chapters 6-7.

machine guns, led to a quite different style of interaction between soldiers?’<sup>131</sup> Certainly, the clearest criticism of the universality of primary group importance is that the tactical situation on the ancient battlefield almost never required small, dispersed groups to act on their own initiative. It was Marshall’s opinion that ‘the thing which enables an infantry soldier to keep going with his weapons is the near presence or the presumed presence of a comrade’.<sup>132</sup> On the ancient battlefield, the presence of numerous comrades was always guaranteed – but trust in the steadfastness and competence of these fellow soldiers was not necessarily assured, and would have to be built up through bonding. As for the suggestion of ignorance on the part of our sources, far more likely is a lack of interest, or the incongruence of such matters with narrative aims.

The ancient evidence is sufficiently sparse that one hesitates to relinquish a high degree of agnosticism on this matter. Even when studying long-dead soldiers, early modern historians have been able to draw on soldiers’ correspondences to investigate the question of primary group bonds.<sup>133</sup> The ancient historian, by contrast, is left with a mass of far less direct evidence, complicated by the conventions of inscriptions and literary style. To assume that primary group relations were of paramount importance on the ancient battlefield, simply because this has been the dominant paradigm of twentieth-century studies, is inappropriate, especially since – as discussed in my introduction – that paradigm has subsequently been weakened.

However, the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, and having dismissed Lendon’s arguments that primary group cohesion is incompatible with our sources, we might well imagine that the highly intimate *contubernia* and *centuriae* did generate bonds of trust and companionship on which men relied both in and out of combat. Furthermore,

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<sup>131</sup> Harris (2006), 317.

<sup>132</sup> Marshall (1947), 42.

<sup>133</sup> E.g. McPherson (1998), 77-89.

by bringing *centuriae* into the discussion where previous scholarship has focused mainly on the *contubernium* as the ancient equivalent of the primary group, we have been able to explore primary group motivation beyond a simple analogy between modern infantry squads and a numerically similar ancient tent group. In terms of the motivation framework, there are certainly reasons to think that the century was an important ‘collectivity’ for a Roman soldier: we have indications that the century to which a soldier belonged was an important part of the soldier’s identity, many aspects of daily life were organised around the century, and it was even the subject of religious reverence.

The centrality of the century and *contubernium* to everyday life is a particularly crucial point. Not only did this mean that soldiers spent a large part of their daily routine with the same group of individuals, providing ample opportunities for relationships to develop, but a vital mutual dependence was also created: a collective responsibility for cooking, transporting vital equipment, and setting up the tent – not to mention mutual reliance in combat – meant that for a legionary, the members of one’s *contubernium* and century were especially important. It is therefore possible to argue that Roman legionaries were strongly tied to their primary units through bonds of mutual dependence, not because small units played a combat role like in modern warfare, but because everyday life in the Roman army was structured around them. However, as discussed in the introduction, strong primary group affiliation does not necessarily lead to affiliation with the army as a whole or the strategic aims for which the soldier is supposed to fight; indeed, the desire for small group preservation can supersede such aims. We therefore proceed to investigate the legionary’s attachment to larger collectivities.

## Chapter 2: The Unit

We proceed to the second possible level of affiliation for the soldier, the unit, meaning for our purposes the legion (though we will also consider the cohort). Roman army studies often highlight *esprit de corps* fostered at the level of the legion as a key motivational factor for Roman soldiers, in many cases drawing a direct analogy with the modern regiment.<sup>1</sup> However, as I note below, it should not be taken for granted that a permanent unit will automatically develop *esprit de corps*,<sup>2</sup> or that this will manifest itself in a way comparable to the modern British regimental system which is often implicitly or explicitly evoked. Phang has pointed to the danger of anachronistically filling out our understanding of the Roman army by importing modern regimental concepts, and the unhelpful tendency of modern translations of ancient texts to use modern unit terminology.<sup>3</sup> Levithan has gone further and explicitly stated, against the common claim that Roman soldiers took pride in their legions' histories *à la* English county regiment soldiers, that 'there is no evidence that soldiers of later generations took personal pride in the legion's past accomplishments.'<sup>4</sup> Certainly, we must test such common assumptions about the post-Marian legion by examining the evidence.

Let us begin by discussing in detail how unit-level affiliation may motivate the soldier. Despite the fact that unit pride or *esprit de corps* are often mentioned, little sociological research has been devoted to analysing precisely how unit-level affiliation affects soldiers; indeed, in the theoretical battleground, where the supporters of primary group theory have fought a bitter defence against the encroaching proponents of ideological and professional motivations, the notion of 'regimental pride' has come to

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<sup>1</sup> Levithan (2013), 26-7; e.g. Lendon (1997), 249-52.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Gabba (1976), 25.

<sup>3</sup> Phang (2011), 108; James (2002), 11-12.

<sup>4</sup> Levithan (2013), 27.

seem positively quaint, a notion more often found in the romantic minds of aged generals than in meticulous sociological studies.

Part of the reason for this neglect is that unit cohesiveness is essentially similar to primary group cohesiveness: it is derived from similar stimuli (deprivation, shared danger), and analysed in terms of the same components (interpersonal attraction, functional and normative integration).<sup>5</sup> The main difference, of course, is scale, and the resultant restriction on the level of personal interaction which can take place between group members. As a result, unit cohesiveness must be artificially engineered and encouraged, unlike the rapid and natural way in which primary group bonds form.

There are further potential differences between primary group bonds and unit cohesiveness. A unit can acquire a more distinct identity independent of the personalities of its individual members – indeed, a history. As well as feeling attachment to other members of his unit, the soldier can relate to the unit as an abstract entity: he can take pride in the unit's history and feel responsible for maintaining it; he can buy into the unit's traditions and behavioural codes; he can feel reverence for the symbols through which the abstract unit is manifested. The relation of the individual to his unit is in some ways like an individual's relation to a small town or village community: though not every member of the community will be personally acquainted or affectionate, an overarching sense of connectedness exists, reinforced by shared traditions, communal activities, quirks of language and fashion, and so on. As with the primary group, the feelings of belonging and interdependence which a soldier derives from membership of a cohesive unit are highly important in motivating and maintaining him; and furthermore, if a unit has substantial resources and a reassuring history of success, the individual's feelings of vulnerability and

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<sup>5</sup> Westbrook (1980), 252.

impotence may be further mitigated.<sup>6</sup> In addition, as an abstract entity, the unit can continue to motivate the soldier when primary groups have been destroyed through the deaths of its individual members.<sup>7</sup>

I have noted that one weakness of primary group theory is that the relative ubiquity of such groups, and the quick and organic way in which they form, hinders the theory's ability to explain differences in performance between armies. In the case of unit cohesiveness, on the contrary, armies can certainly differ in the extent to which units are considered important and develop distinct identities and traditions. Consider this (certainly somewhat hyperbolic) description of the differences between American and British units in World War II: 'Their [the Americans'] units were soulless things known by numbers and letters, and their reinforcements... were brought up to the front like cattle and introduced into a decimated unit of sullen and perhaps hostile strangers... By contrast, the British reinforcements, even if they were being fed into a disagreeable situation, were rejoicing their own 'tribe' and expected to see again not only their cap-badge – that great talisman – but the familiar faces of comrades.'<sup>8</sup>

In discussing unit-level attachment, then, we ought to consider three things: first, how unique the legions were, allowing soldiers to relate to units with distinctive 'personalities' rather than a 'soulless thing known by numbers and letters'; secondly, the mechanisms through which attachment to the legion could be generated for its members (e.g. collective ceremonies, symbolic manifestations); and thirdly, having examined to what extent these institutions *could* have generated attachment, we must explore the evidence for the existence of this attachment, much as we examined the evidence for bonds to *contubernia* and *centuriae* above.

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<sup>6</sup> Richardson (1978), 14-22.

<sup>7</sup> Wesbrook (1980), 252-3, 258-60.

<sup>8</sup> Bidwell (1973), 139.

Before exploring the relationship of the soldier to his unit, we must examine the organisation of the legion. The term *legio* originally simply meant ‘levy’, deriving from *legere*, and may have originally been the term for the army, before coming to refer to its principal sub-units.<sup>9</sup> The structure of the army in earliest times can only be the subject of speculation; not until Polybius’ description in the mid-second century BC do we receive any significant detail. There are many difficulties in reconstructing the pre-Marian legion; much of the evidence from Livy is highly contentious, and even the eyewitness Polybius presents many problems, such as in his strange and improbable description of the levy.<sup>10</sup>

At some point in the second century BC, the traditional manipular arrangement of the Roman army was replaced with the cohortal system. In the first place, this entailed the replacement of the 120-man maniple (comprised of two 60-man centuries) as the primary tactical unit with the 480-man cohort (comprised of six 80-man centuries).<sup>11</sup> Given that the earliest references to cohorts as fighting units relate to the wars in Spain (Livy contains 17 references to cohorts used in Spain between 210-195 BC), scholars explain the tactical shift as a response to the peculiar challenges of warfare in Iberia: Spanish hit-and-run tactics required a unit smaller and more manoeuvrable than a legion, but larger than a maniple.<sup>12</sup> But as well as this change in unit sizes, the cohortal army also eliminated distinctions based on age, wealth, and equipment; no longer did clearly differentiated *velites*, *hastati*, *principes* and *triarii* operate distinctly – rather a commander would now deal with uniform blocks of heavy infantry. Although Marius certainly cannot be said to have invented the cohort, or instituted it as standard, his campaigns at the end of the second century BC coincide with the final abandonment of manipular tactics.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Varro 5.87: *legio, quod leguntur milites in delectu*.

<sup>10</sup> Polyb. 6.19-21; De Ligt (2007), 115-6.

<sup>11</sup> Keppie (1984), 63-7.

<sup>12</sup> Bell (1965).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 417-8.

The precise way in which cohortal organisation evolved is not of pressing importance to us; the key fact is that this mode of organisation persisted throughout our period of study.<sup>14</sup> Although the legionary cohort was of vital tactical importance, it does not seem to have had any emotional importance;<sup>15</sup> unlike the *centuria*, it had no *genius*, and Speidel could only find four funerary inscriptions in which a legionary was identified by cohort rather than by *centuria* (these he explained as resulting from the soldiers' service in expeditionary forces far from their legions).<sup>16</sup> Nor was the cohort, so far as can be seen, ever given its own standard.<sup>17</sup> Although it is plausible that soldiers, especially after combat experience, may have formed an attachment with their particular cohort, no evidence exists for this, and the cohort should properly be seen as a loose amalgamation of more tightly-bonded individual *centuriae*.

Although the basic fact of the ten-cohort organisation of the legion in our period is not disputed, controversy persists on two topics: the enlarged first cohort, and the total number of men in a legion. The evidence does suggest that at some point in the first century AD, the first cohort was expanded: this is explicit in Pseudo-Hyginus (*duplum numerum habet*),<sup>18</sup> and seems to be corroborated by the extra space allocated to the first cohort at sites including Caerleon, Inchtuthil, and Nijmegen.<sup>19</sup> In addition, there are first-century AD inscriptions recording discharges by cohort which list almost twice as many discharges from the first cohort.<sup>20</sup> Less certain is the notion that this first cohort contained five *centuriae* rather than the standard six. Though this is commonly accepted,<sup>21</sup> the idea seems to have originated simply by analogy with the auxiliary milliary cohort described by

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<sup>14</sup> Howarth (2013), 34.

<sup>15</sup> Goldsworthy (1999), 201.

<sup>16</sup> Speidel (1982), 854; *CIL* III, 7396; *AE* 1976, 640; *CIL* III, 11221; *AE* 1951, 194.

<sup>17</sup> Rankov (2007), 32; Speidel (1982), 856-8.

<sup>18</sup> *De. Mun. Castr.* 3.

<sup>19</sup> Davison (1989), 52-9.

<sup>20</sup> Speidel (1992), 7; *CIL* III, 6178; *CIL* III, 14507; *AE* 1969-70, 633.

<sup>21</sup> Speidel (1992), 9.

Pseudo-Hyginus,<sup>22</sup> and the archaeological evidence adduced in support is inconclusive.<sup>23</sup> The reality behind our inconclusive evidence may be simply that not all legions possessed enlarged first cohorts – perhaps only legions particularly likely to engage in campaigning received these extra soldiers (hence at Inchtuthil, for example).<sup>24</sup>

As for the total number of men in the legion, there has been considerable quibbling.<sup>25</sup> But these esoteric debates about nominal strength – usually put somewhere between 5,000 to 6,000 – are less important than the often-neglected fact that the total number of men living together in a unit could vary wildly. The most important reason for this is the regular detachment of large numbers of men for duties which could take them extreme distances from their legionary fortress, discussed at length in chapter 8. Besides, there is no indication that legions were supposed to be kept at any particular level of strength; as Goldsworthy summarises, ‘All the indications suggest that the reality of the Roman army’s deployment was just as messy and irregular as any comparable force’.<sup>26</sup> Auxiliaries were provided for the support and assistance of legions as necessary (although some legions were closely associated with certain auxiliary units, auxiliary units were by default attached to provinces rather than to specific legions).<sup>27</sup> However, it should be noted that auxiliaries sometimes shared fortress space with legionaries, as in the record of a loan at Nicopolis, which refers to the *castra hiberna* of *legio II Traiana Fortis* and *ala veteranae Gallicae tertium*.<sup>28</sup>

It was, on occasion, possible for individual soldiers to be transferred between units. David Breeze has recently collected the evidence for this practice, which, though limited,

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<sup>22</sup> *De. Mun. Castr.* 28.

<sup>23</sup> Roth (1994), 359-61.

<sup>24</sup> Gilliver (1999), 21-2.

<sup>25</sup> Roth (1994) summarises.

<sup>26</sup> Goldsworthy (1996), 21-4.

<sup>27</sup> Saddington (1982), 183-4.

<sup>28</sup> *P. Fouad.* I.45.

provides examples of soldiers moving from a legion to an auxiliary unit, from an auxiliary cohort to the fleet, from a fleet to a legion, and from one auxiliary cohort to another.<sup>29</sup> In theory, then, a recruit was not tied to a particular unit or even to a branch of service for his entire career; however, the evidence does not allow us to speculate on how frequent such transfers might have been. The three *pridiana* which mention transfers do specify that they were conducted on the authority of the provincial governor, which may indicate that these were exceptional cases requiring relatively high-level approval; then again, this may just have been a formality.<sup>30</sup> Units could be readily split into smaller detachments and sent to disparate locations, so the most obvious reason for a potential transfer from one unit to another – reinforcement of manpower – would be dealt with through a detachment or vexillation rather than assigning soldiers to entirely new units.

To what extent did legions possess distinctive identities, and how and when did these develop? The legions of the ancient Republic possessed no real identity, since they were created and disbanded on an ad hoc basis.<sup>31</sup> As mentioned in my introduction, the Roman soldiery began to be drawn from an ever-poorer demographic in the late Republic, providing a more willing base for the standing legions which began to be employed alongside the temporary campaigning armies.<sup>32</sup> As one might expect, armies in which the same personnel served on continuous campaigns began to acquire strong collective identities,<sup>33</sup> as in the forces which took on the names of their commanders such as the Sullani<sup>34</sup> and the Fimbrians.<sup>35</sup>

However, in contrast to the way in which the legion became a home for many

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<sup>29</sup> Breeze (2018).

<sup>30</sup> Fink, *RMR* 63, 64; Thomas and Davies (1977).

<sup>31</sup> Howarth (2013), 31.

<sup>32</sup> Smith (1958), 28-9.

<sup>33</sup> De Blois (2007), 169-73.

<sup>34</sup> E.g. Sall. *BC*. 16.4.

<sup>35</sup> Plut. *Luc*. 7.1.

soldiers in the imperial period,<sup>36</sup> it is clear that many of these legionaries were simply interested in amassing loot and returning home, such as when the Lucullans, having claimed their gold, demanded a rest from fighting.<sup>37</sup> Cagniart summarises: ‘It would be difficult to find a better illustration of the nature of the Roman army in the sixties, an army of mercenaries willing to follow their general until they amassed enough loot, and who were totally indifferent to the goals and significance of the war they were fighting.’<sup>38</sup> Naturally, the generous discharge bonuses offered after Augustus’ reforms meant that soldiers needed to (and knew they needed to) remain with their legion for a full twenty years, mitigating against the unrest associated with demands for discharge which had so disrupted the armies of the late Republic and civil war period.

Nevertheless, by the time of Caesar, one arguably sees a significantly different kind of army: although Caesar implemented little in terms of organisational or tactical innovation,<sup>39</sup> his soldiers possessed an ‘image of themselves, as soldiers’.<sup>40</sup> Legionaries also began to be settled separately from civilians. Many of the most significant Sullan colonies were established alongside existing communities (from which the veterans’ land had been seized), but were initially administered separately as colony and *municipium*.<sup>41</sup> Octavian’s eleventh legion settled together at Ateste, calling themselves Actiaci on their tombstones in commemoration of their involvement at Actium.<sup>42</sup> Tacitus makes this interesting comment on the practice of veteran settlement, referring to AD 60: ‘Whole legions were no longer transplanted, as in former days, with tribunes and centurions and soldiers of every grade, so as to form a state by their unity and mutual attachment, but

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<sup>36</sup> Cf. Tac. *Hist.* 2.80.

<sup>37</sup> Plut. *Luc.* 31-2.

<sup>38</sup> Cagniart (2007), 84.

<sup>39</sup> Keppie (1984), 101.

<sup>40</sup> Cagniart (2007), 93.

<sup>41</sup> Gabba (1976), 46.

<sup>42</sup> Horsfall (2003), 108.

strangers to one another from different companies, without a head or any community of sentiment, were suddenly gathered together, as it might be out of any other class of human beings, and became a mere crowd rather than a colony'.<sup>43</sup>

Very clear in this passage is the notion that legions were quasi-communities which could be transplanted into colonies, and would be exceptionally harmonious due to their *adfectus mutuus*; on the other hand, men from different units (*diversis manipulis*) could not be expected to cohere in the same way. There are indeed signs that veteran settlers continued to act as representatives of their legion, often engaging in certain activities distinct from the civilian population, such as their yearly affirmation of loyalty to the emperor.<sup>44</sup>

Modern analysts have noted that one problem with attributing combat performance to unit-level motivation is that such solidarity is difficult to develop, particularly with the rapid mobilisations seen in modern warfare, where individuals rarely had time to become truly integrated into their units before entering combat, or were reluctant to make the unit their 'home', having been conscripted from civilian society.<sup>45</sup> On both of these points, the Roman legion (at least in the Principate) presents quite a different proposition: the lengthy terms of service meant that recruits were entirely able to form a close association with their unit, and knew upon enlistment that they would have to make a life for themselves in their legion. The shift from temporary conscript armies to longer-serving professional armies, populated with men who saw themselves as soldiers, was thus a crucial step in the

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<sup>43</sup> Tac. Ann. 14.27: *non enim, ut olim, universae legiones deducebantur cum tribunis et centurionibus et sui cuiusque ordinis militibus ut consensu et caritate rem publicam efficerent, sed ignoti inter se, diversis manipulis, sine rectore, sine adfectibus mutuis, quasi ex alio genere mortalium repente in unum collecti, numerus magis quam colonia.*

<sup>44</sup> CIL III, 6166; MacMullen (1984), 441-3.

<sup>45</sup> Wesbrook (1980), 259.

development of unit-level motivation: previously, recruits lacked not only the time to develop affiliation, but also the will to fully embrace military society.

A key step in the development of unique legion identities was the introduction of legion titles, beginning in the Civil War period. As Keppie notes, it is surprising that this had not occurred previously, such as in the Second Punic War when many legions were retained in service for long periods.<sup>46</sup> Yet until the death of Caesar, only one legion title is known, *Martia* (although this may well be anachronism on the part of Valerius Maximus).<sup>47</sup> It is surely the case that the simultaneous existence of legions with the same numbers in rival armies encouraged the use of titles. As titles came to be equally or more important than numbers in identifying legions, emperors made little effort to avoid repeating legion numbers.<sup>48</sup>

Titles could reflect a unit's history in different ways, referring to service in a particular province, such as *I Germanica*; to the province in which the legion was raised, such as *I Italica*; to association with a particular god, such as *XV Apollinaris*; or to a particular action in which the legion had been involved, such as *legio X Fretensis* for its exploits in the *Fretum Siculum*.<sup>49</sup> Septimius Severus gave the name *Parthica* to the three legions which he raised for his campaigns in that area.<sup>50</sup>

In one soldier's inscription, the Third legion, which served with Caesar in Gaul and with Octavian at Mutina, is given the title *paterna*,<sup>51</sup> as is the Twelfth legion in an inscription from 27 BC (this legion later bore the title *Fulminata*).<sup>52</sup> As Campbell points out, the legions may indeed have borne these titles for a time, in an attempt by Octavian to

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<sup>46</sup> Keppie (1984), 136-7.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 137; Val. Max. 3.2.19.

<sup>48</sup> Gilliver (2007), 188.

<sup>49</sup> Keppie (1984), 138.

<sup>50</sup> Gilliver (2007), 188-9.

<sup>51</sup> *CIL X*, 3884.

<sup>52</sup> *CIL XI*, 1058.

remind the soldiers of their association with his adoptive father – but they may equally represent appellations by the soldiers themselves.<sup>53</sup> Whether we are dealing with a temporary title assigned to project a political message or a nickname which originated from the soldiery, we have here a good indication of the potential significance of legion nomenclature: to both soldiers and emperors, these titles mattered.

A legion could also develop a sense of its own history and reputation. In Germanicus' appeal to the rebellious German legions as reported by Tacitus, he emphasises how their present conduct contrasts disgracefully with their previous loyalty and service, calling the First and Twentieth legions *illa signis a Tiberio acceptis, tu tot proeliorum socia, tot praemiis aucta* ('you who received your standards from Tiberius, you who have shared so many battles and been enriched by so many rewards').<sup>54</sup> This appeal was apparently successful, and Tacitus claims that the men begged to be led against the enemy, erasing their unseemly conduct with a new campaign.<sup>55</sup> In a similar case of a unit's history affecting its decisions and loyalties, Tacitus mentions that the Fourteenth legion had been named as especially able by Nero, and so were particularly loyal to him – a loyalty inherited by Otho.<sup>56</sup> It is telling that Tacitus should think of legions as having such consistency of sentiment, given his portrayal of the soldiers themselves as venal, greedy, and untrustworthy.

Caesar was famously fond of his Tenth legion, and, when his other legions were afraid to face the Germans, he emphasised the valour of the Tenth and thus shamed the others into following them.<sup>57</sup> Indeed, at least in Josephus' mind, there seemed to be a clear hierarchy of unit reputations among the forces of Titus' army, and he is surprised (as are

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<sup>53</sup> Campbell (1984), 89.

<sup>54</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 1.42.

<sup>55</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 1.44.

<sup>56</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 2.11, 2.66.1, 2.86.4.

<sup>57</sup> Caes. *BG.* 1.40-2.

the participants themselves) when units act beyond their reputation: he writes of how a Jewish sally was almost successful, but for the actions of the Alexandrian *ἐπίλεκτοι* who acted more bravely than even they themselves expected.<sup>58</sup>

Negative reputations could also attach to legions: Agricola, having proved himself loyal and energetic, was given command of the twentieth legion precisely because its own loyalty was suspect, the men having been slow to take the oath of allegiance.<sup>59</sup> The desire to erase a negative reputation or compensate for previous failures could be turned to motivational purposes, as when Germanicus encouraged the twentieth legion to ‘turn guilt into glory’ (*culpam in decus vertere*) and efface the stain of their mutiny through particular gallantry against the Germans.<sup>60</sup> Similarly, Josephus reports that among the four legions with which Titus launched an assault on Jerusalem, the Twelfth legion was particularly eager (*προθυμότερον*) because it sought to avenge previous losses suffered at the hands of the Jewish defenders, especially as they usually bore a reputation for valour.<sup>61</sup> In the end, those prior failures were not forgotten: after the successful conclusion of the campaign, the Twelfth legion was removed from Syria.<sup>62</sup> Recalling the compliance relationships described in the introduction, it is clear that legions were strong loci for normative attachment. Even Tacitus, who views the motivations of the soldiers almost entirely cynically, makes clear that soldiers could feel shame and pride for their units.

There are many hints in the sources that there could be rivalries between legions, of a tense or friendly nature depending on the circumstances. Such rivalries would further suggest that legions were distinctive, and that their members felt a strong sense of belonging to their own unit. One of the most interesting examples comes from Tacitus’

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<sup>58</sup> Jos. *BJ.* 5.287.

<sup>59</sup> Tac. *Ag.* 7.

<sup>60</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 1.51.

<sup>61</sup> Jos. *BJ.* 5.41; 2.500-555.

<sup>62</sup> Jos. *BJ.* 7.18.

account of the Pannonian mutiny, when at one point the three legions involved proposed to amalgamate their forces; but as Tacitus explains, rivalry (*aemulatio*) and the desire of every soldier to preserve his own legion prohibited this.<sup>63</sup> It is remarkable that even during a complete breakdown of discipline and obedience, the men remain loyal to their units; for them, the legion is not an administrative structure to which they direct their grievances, but a community whose interests they see as connected to their own.

A little later in the mutiny narrative, Tacitus describes how the Eighth legion demanded a centurion by the name of Sirpicus be handed over to them for execution, but this man was defended by the Fifteenth; the men of the two legions were close to coming to blows over the issue, until the Ninth legion, attempting first persuasion and then threats, interceded.<sup>64</sup> Tacitus does not specify to which legion Sirpicus belonged – was he a popular centurion of the Fifteenth, whom the Eighth nevertheless wanted to executed as part of the general attack on the centurions, or was he an abusive member of the Eighth? The former is surely correct – why else would the Fifteenth care to spare this particular centurion among the many centurions targeted during this episode? If so, the Fifteenth legion is defending, as a community, ‘one of its own’.

Another hint may come through in a typically enigmatic passage of the *De Munitionibus Castrorum*, where the author advises that vexillations should not be positioned near the rampart, because ‘if the rampart were overrun by the enemy, the legion and the legate will accuse the vexillations there of being responsible’ (*si casu hoste vallum interruptum fuerit, legio et legatus eorum per vexillarios factum esse contendet*).<sup>65</sup> The author seems to believe that vexillations – outsiders from other legions – will, in the case of a reverse, naturally be the first targets of blame from the legions to which they are

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<sup>63</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 1.18: *depulsi aemulatione, quia suae quisque legioni eum honorem quaerebant.*

<sup>64</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 1.23. The fate of Sirpicus is unknown.

<sup>65</sup> *De. Mun. Castr.* 5.

temporarily attached.

Rivalries between legions could also be stimulated to positive ends. Josephus' description of the competitiveness when the Romans surrounded Jerusalem with a wall seems to indicate that competition between legions (*τάγματα* in Josephus' vocabulary) was the most expected form of inter-unit competition: 'not only did each legion strive with each other, but the lesser divisions also did likewise' (*οὐ μόνον τῶν ταγμάτων ἦν ἔρις, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς τάξεων πρὸς ἀλλήλας*).<sup>66</sup>

It is quite possible that legions were encouraged to think of themselves as singular communities, resulting in a default state of rivalry, even hostility, between them; although this could result in problems when multiple legions had to work together, it was in the imperial interest to separate the legions and ensure they could not develop common interests. For whereas separate communities could be antagonistic, legions close and accustomed to one another were capable of coordinating. There were several legionary bases constructed in the Augustan period which housed two legions (maybe reflecting the Republican practice of two-legion consular armies).<sup>67</sup> These were located mainly on the Rhine, at Xanten, Köln, and Mainz. As a result of long familiarity and cooperation, the forces located in double-legion bases appear to have been dangerously well-coordinated: Suetonius reports that Domitian abolished double-legion bases (although the two legions of Egypt in fact continued to share a base at Nicopolis into the reign of Hadrian)<sup>68</sup> after Saturninus' attempt to use the combined forces and treasury of *XXI Rapax* and *XIV Gemina* in an attempted usurpation.<sup>69</sup> Syme even suggested that the impetus for this uprising may have come from the soldiers themselves, rather than their governor.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Jos. *BJ.* 5.502-3; cf. Jos. *BJ.* 6.142: *κατ' ἄνδρα καὶ κατὰ συντάξεις ἤριζον ἀλλήλοις.*

<sup>67</sup> Bishop (2012), 14.

<sup>68</sup> Keppie (1984), 196.

<sup>69</sup> Suet. *Dom.* 7.3. Cf. Tac. *Hist.* 1.9.

<sup>70</sup> Syme (1978), 20-1.

To what extent armies and legions were distinct in culture and language is a complicated issue. Describing his scepticism about the story that the Othonian and Vitellian armies considered selecting the new emperor by mutual deliberation rather than fighting, Tacitus includes among his reasons for doubt the fact that the armies ‘differed in language and customs’ (*linguis moribus dissoni*).<sup>71</sup> Ash argues that, given that Tacitus elsewhere describes the Flavian army which sacked Cremona as ‘varied in language and customs’ (*vario linguis moribus*), being composed of citizens, allies, and foreigners,<sup>72</sup> it is unclear whether he means that the Othonians and Vitellians differed from each other in this respect, or whether each army was itself mixed.<sup>73</sup> In context, it seems to me far more likely that Tacitus means the former, as this is a more fitting explanation of why two armies could not cooperate.<sup>74</sup> Elsewhere, Tacitus describes Vespasian’s soldiers as ‘kindled into indignation by the insolence of the soldiers who came among them from Vitellius, who were savage in appearance, and spoke a rude dialect’.<sup>75</sup>

Since legionary bases were scattered across the empire, and increasingly drew their recruits from their local area, it makes sense that many or most men in a legion would share the same background. However, the fact that recruitment was never entirely local, and that vexillations in far-flung provinces could recruit soldiers locally, meant that all legions were ethnically mixed to a considerable extent.<sup>76</sup> Moreover, it is telling that legions did not acquire ethnic signifiers, nor do our sources indicate that legions ever identified themselves on the basis of their ethnic composition – in contrast to auxiliary units, who retained ethnic signifiers even when these ceased to reflect the origins of the soldiers that

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<sup>71</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 2.37.

<sup>72</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 3.33.

<sup>73</sup> Ash (1999), 67.

<sup>74</sup> I remain unconvinced by Master’s (2014) argument that this passage is a pointed allusion to Sall. *BC.* 6.

<sup>75</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 2.74: *namque omnis exercitus flammaverat adrogantia venientium a Vitellio militum, quod truces corpore, horridi sermone.*

<sup>76</sup> See chapter 8 on this latter point.

served in them.<sup>77</sup>

As bodies possessing identities and histories, legions could be so stained with dishonour that their very existence could no longer be maintained. During the Dardanian War, Curio abolished one of his five legions, and distributed its members among the other four – the disgraced individuals were thus still present, but the shame which attached to their unit was wiped out.<sup>78</sup> Augustus ignominiously disbanded the Tenth legion and others who impertinently demanded their discharge, and the Seventeenth, Eighteenth, and Nineteenth legions, slaughtered in the Varian disaster, were never replaced.<sup>79</sup> Some legions simply disappear from the army list, whose disgrace or destruction we must assume: *XV Primigenia* disappears after the revolt of Civilis; *V Alaudae* after Cornelius Fuscus' defeat in Dacia in AD 68; *XXII Deiotariana* was possibly destroyed in the Jewish revolt of AD 132-5.<sup>80</sup>

Legions could also be rewarded collectively, with the donation of devices such as coronae which were subsequently depicted on unit standards.<sup>81</sup> *XX* and *XIV Gemina* were awarded battle honours ('the ancient equivalent of a unit citation'), probably for crushing the Boudiccan revolt.<sup>82</sup> Claudius gave the title of *Claudia Pia Fidelis* to the Seventh and Eleventh legions for their refusal to march against him with Scribonianus in AD 42.<sup>83</sup> Conversely, in much the same way that legions could receive their titles from involvement in successful actions, so too could they be stripped of an honourable title if they disgraced themselves. For example, Dio reports that a legion was stripped of the title *Augusta* after numerous defeats in Spain.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Derks (2009), 243.

<sup>78</sup> Front. *Strat.* 4.1.43.

<sup>79</sup> Suet. *Aug.* 24.2.

<sup>80</sup> Watson (1969), 121.

<sup>81</sup> Maxfield (1981), 218-35.

<sup>82</sup> Gilliver (2007), 189.

<sup>83</sup> Dio. 55.23.4; 60.15.4.

<sup>84</sup> Dio. 54.11.5.

In terms of compliance theory, we see here an interesting intersection between remunerative motivation and unit attachment: if legions are collectively rewarded, striving for the success of the legion becomes a reasonably self-interested act for a soldier. The soldiers would also be incentivised to desire aggressive action. In addition, rivalries and therefore distinctions between legions would be exacerbated; another legion's success lessens the achievements – and potentially the rewards – of one's own.

As for normative motivation, numerous anecdotes point to the attachment and pride individual legionaries could feel for their legions. One of the most notable anecdotes of this kind is to be found in the *African War*:<sup>85</sup>

'Labienus rode bare-headed up and down the front line, encouraging his own men and occasionally accosting Caesar's legionaries in terms such as these: 'What are you doing, recruit? Fierce, aren't you? Have all of you too been made fools of by that fellow's words? What a very dangerous situation he has driven you into. I feel sorry for you.' 'I'm no recruit, Labienus,' replied one soldier, 'but a veteran of the Tenth legion.' To this Labienus retorted: 'I don't recognise the standards of the Tenth.' Then the soldier said: 'You'll soon see what I'm made of.' As he spoke, he flung the helmet from his head so that the other could recognise him and, thus uncovered, lifted his javelin with all his force, as he aimed it at Labienus; then hurling it violently into the horse's chest he said: 'That will teach you, Labienus, that it's a soldier of the Tenth who is attacking you.'

*Labienus in equo capite nudo versari in prima acie; simul suos cohortari, non numquam legionarios Caesaris ita appellare: 'Quid tu,' inquit, 'miles tiro? Tam feroculus es? Vos quoque iste verbis infatuavit? In magnum mehercule vos*

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<sup>85</sup> *B. Afr.* 16 (trans. Way, adapted).

*periculum impulit. Misereor vestri.' Tum miles, 'Non sum,' inquit, 'tiro, Labiene, sed de legione X. veteranus.' Tum Labienus, 'Non agnosco,' inquit, 'signa decumanorum.' Tum ait miles: 'Iam me qui sim intelleges'; simul cassidem de capite deiecit, ut cognosci ab eo posset, atque ita pilum viribus contortum, dum in Labienum mittere contendit, equi graviter adverso pectori adfixit et ait: 'Labiene, decumanum militem qui te petit scito esse.'*

This passage reveals an interesting intersection of personal and collective identity: the soldier is motivated to act on behalf of the legion and its reputation, and with his final remark he makes clear that he is acting as a *decumanus miles* should; but he also removes his helmet *ut cognosci ab eo posset* – his defence of the legion's honour is intended to enhance his own glory. Given the respect which legionaries afforded to their standards, and their status as symbolic embodiments of the legion, one can comprehend the offensive import of Labienus' claim not to recognise the standards of the Tenth at all.

Although the names of individual soldiers involved in notable exploits are sometimes recorded by ancient authors, the writer of the *African War* only mentions the legion to which the soldier belonged – perhaps that is all he knew; perhaps this was a rumour enjoyed and spread by the Tenth. There are other occasions on which the specific legion to which soldiers belonged is mentioned, such as Josephus' story of how three soldiers of the Fifteenth legion crept up to the base of a Jewish tower and began to undermine it.<sup>86</sup> It seems that when stories of valour were circulated and recorded, the legion to which the participants belonged was considered an important detail.

As mentioned above, legions could develop distinct reputations. We may infer the importance of these reputations to individual legions from the way in which some

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<sup>86</sup> Jos. *BJ.* 4.63.

commanders made sure to reference unit reputations and histories as a way to motivate their men: the *African War* records that before the Battle of Thapsus,

‘He [Julius Caesar] himself hurriedly went around his troops on foot, reminding the veterans of their virtuous conduct in previous actions, and raising their morale with flattering appeals. As for the recruits, seeing that they had not yet fought a pitched battle, he urged them to emulate the valour of the veterans and to make it their ambition, by gaining a victory, to enjoy fame, status and renown equal to theirs.’

*Iipse pedibus circum milites concursans virtutesque veteranorum proeliaque superiora commemorans blandeque appellans animos eorum excitabat. Tirones autem, qui numquam in acie dimicassent, hortabatur ut veteranorum virtutem aemularentur eorumque famam, locum, nomen victoria parta cuperent possidere.*<sup>87</sup>

Collective reputations for combat achievements could be earned, and gain men ‘fame, status, and renown’: this inspires the veterans to protect and live up to their unit’s reputation, and sets a standard to which the recruits are encouraged to aspire. In a very real sense, for a soldier who closely identified with his legion, his success and the success of his unit were one and the same.

The legion, of course, had its own *genius*, to which soldiers might make offerings.<sup>88</sup> Indeed, the earliest known dedication to the *genius* of a military unit is to the *genius* of the Eleventh legion at Vindonissa.<sup>89</sup> Dedications to the *genius legionis* include both public and private inscriptions, set up by ordinary soldiers and officers alike, although, as mentioned in the previous chapter, dedications to the *genius centuriae* are by far the most numerous kind.<sup>90</sup> Nonetheless, there is plenty of evidence that soldiers often

<sup>87</sup> *B. Afr.* 81 (trans. Way, adapted).

<sup>88</sup> E.g. *RIB* 449: *Genio [leg(ionis) XX]*.

<sup>89</sup> *AE* 1926, 69.

<sup>90</sup> Speidel and Dimitrova-Milceva (1978), 1545-7.

wished to offer similar reverence and protection to their legions. The closest any such dedication comes to telling us about esprit de corps is a dedication by an *optio* ‘to the sacred *genius* of the legion and of the good *commanipulares*’ (*genio sancto legionis et commanipulorum bonorum*).<sup>91</sup> Speidel and Dimitrova-Milceva consider that ‘Possibly Kalendinus considered all his colleagues *boni* and hence simply invoked the *Genius centuriae*, but it cannot be excluded that he called upon a *Genius* only of his good colleagues as distinguished from others, less virtuous ones.’<sup>92</sup> I consider it also possible, however, that this slightly odd dedication is supposed to invoke something like ‘the *genius* of the legion, the one that protects the *commanipulares boni*’.

The legion’s spirit and identity was closely associated with its eagle and standards, which were also associated with religious veneration. The standards, housed in a shrine above the *principia* – thus occupying the very heart of a legionary base – were themselves objects of cult.<sup>93</sup> They displayed the zodiac sign associated with the day of the legion’s founding, and were centrally displayed in all the legion’s ceremonial activities.<sup>94</sup> Seneca says the love of the standards (*signorum amor*), along with the oath and the horror of desertion, was the soldier’s ‘primary bond’ (*primum militiae vinculum*), and the reverence with which the legion’s standards were regarded by the soldiers frequently appears in our sources.<sup>95</sup> Tacitus claims that when Munatius Plancus, an envoy sent from Rome to meet with Germanicus during the German revolt, was almost murdered by the mutineers, he sought sacred protection by grasping the legionary standards and eagle (*signa et aquilam amplexus religione sese tutabatur*).<sup>96</sup> This is a highly dramatic image, recalling the trope of suppliants clinging to temple altars, and suggests that the standards were infused with a

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<sup>91</sup> *ILS* 2290.

<sup>92</sup> Speidel and Dimitrova-Milceva (1978), 1550.

<sup>93</sup> Hoey (1937); Campbell (1984), 96-9; Ash (2007), 125.

<sup>94</sup> Irby-Massie (1999), 38-45.

<sup>95</sup> Sen. *Ep.* 95.35; Tert. *Apol.* 16.8.

<sup>96</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 1.39.

similar sanctity; Tacitus intends to relate the complete breakdown of respect for all forms of authority among the mutineers, and this story, in which only the intercession of a brave *aquilifer* saves the suppliant Plancus, relies on an understanding that the standards are supposed to inspire serious religious awe. According to Suetonius, a revolt against Claudius by the legions in Dalmatia was averted when the legionaries were sent into a superstitious panic by their inability to adorn the eagle (*aquila ornari*; one wonders precisely how this inability manifested itself) or pull the *signa* out of the ground.<sup>97</sup> Plutarch reports similar difficulties extracting the standards from the ground prior to Crassus' ill-fated Parthian campaign.<sup>98</sup>

The religious veneration associated with standards was also heightened by the fact that an image of the reigning emperor was often placed under the eagle; thus Tiberius rewarded the Syrian legions because they had not consecrated an image of Sejanus (*nullam Seiani imaginem inter signa coluissent*).<sup>99</sup> When Otho was proclaimed emperor by the soldiers, they surrounded his very person with their *signa* and *vexilla*.<sup>100</sup>

The eagle, bearing the legion's battle honours and thus embodying the spirit and history of the unit, also had a prominent role on the battlefield: its presence at the front of the line was intended to inspire aggression and steadfastness, as a visual reminder of the unit for which the soldier fought.<sup>101</sup> Several anecdotes make clear the importance of the legion's standard in battle, most famously Caesar's tale of how his men hesitated to disembark during the invasion of Britain, until the *aquilifer* of the Tenth legion exhorted his fellow soldiers and ran towards the enemy with the eagle.<sup>102</sup> It is explicitly the potential loss of the *aquila* which animates the men: they are forced to follow and protect the

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<sup>97</sup> Suet. *Cl.* 13.2.

<sup>98</sup> Plut. *Crass.* 23.1.

<sup>99</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 48.2.

<sup>100</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 1.36.

<sup>101</sup> Levithan (2013), 28-9.

<sup>102</sup> Caes. *BG.* 4.25.3-5.

*aquilifer* ‘unless they wished to betray the eagle to the enemy’ (*nisi vultis aquilam hostibus prodere*) – a possibility which Caesar describes as a disgrace (*dedecus*). Similarly, Caesar commemorates the *aquilifer* Lucius Petrosidius, who made it his last act to hurl the eagle to safety within the ramparts of the Roman camp while he himself was slain outside,<sup>103</sup> and an *aquilifer* of the Ninth legion who, as he lay dying amid a retreat, called out to some passing cavalymen to ensure that they would return the eagle safely to Caesar’s camp.<sup>104</sup> For Suetonius, Augustus’ most remarkable display of battlefield bravery was when he himself shouldered an eagle on behalf of the legion’s wounded *aquilifer*.<sup>105</sup> Conversely, the loss of a standard was the ultimate possible disgrace.<sup>106</sup> The deep importance with which the standards were regarded is an important signal that the units with which they were associated were also revered by soldiers.

As with mentions of centurial affiliation, many pieces of graffiti mention an individual’s legion. Legions are commonly mentioned in quarry graffiti, sometimes mentioning both individuals and their units, e.g. *Ael(ius) Lucanus, [co]r(nicen) leg(ionis) II Aug(ustae)*,<sup>107</sup> and sometimes simply the unit, e.g. *leg(io) VI Vict(rix) P(ia) F(idelis)*.<sup>108</sup> Many of the Perusine *glandes* – sling bullets, often inscribed with offensive messages – contained the names of the legions which created them.<sup>109</sup> Soldiers might also refer to their legions on their shields, as with the shield of Junius Dubitatus, inscribed with the name of his legion, *XIII Augusta*, as well as its symbol, the bull.<sup>110</sup> These ‘unofficial’ mentions of unit affiliation strongly indicate that a soldier’s legion was an important part of his identity.

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<sup>103</sup> Caes. *BG.* 5.37.5.

<sup>104</sup> Caes. *BC.* 3.64.

<sup>105</sup> Suet. *Aug.* 10.4.

<sup>106</sup> Lee (1996), 208.

<sup>107</sup> *RIB* 998.

<sup>108</sup> *RIB* 1953; see also *RIB* 999, 1005, 1008, 1014, 1680.

<sup>109</sup> E.g. *CIL* XI, 6721.18. See Hallett (1977) on the *glandes*.

<sup>110</sup> *CIL* VII, 495; British Museum no. 1893,1213.1.

## Conclusion

In sum, our evidence gives us no reason to doubt that the legion was integral to a soldier's identity, a source of immense pride and attachment, and regarded with reverence. The literary evidence in particular affirms that Roman legions had meaningful identities, while inscriptional evidence suggests that soldiers believed this too, and integrated membership of a legion into their personal identities. Furthermore, whereas the previous chapter found little evidence that Roman commanders recognised or deliberately stimulated primary group bonds, we have clear indications that commanders promoted and exploited the importance of unit-level bonds: they praised and honoured particular legions, stimulated inter-unit rivalries, heaped shame on disgraced legions, and played on the reverence for the legionary eagles and standards.

To return to the motivational framework, it seems clear that unit-level attachment was significant for a Roman soldier – the analogy with the British regiment (as opposed to, for instance, the 'soulless' units of the American army in World War II) seems reasonable, in that these Roman units had clear identities and histories, were intended to be sources of loyalty, and did indeed play an important part in a soldier's own conception of his relationship with the army. I shall pick this discussion up again in chapter 8, where I consider how the practice of detachment meant that legions were frequently physically fragmented – but evidence for detached soldiers still feeling a sense of belonging to their distant legions reaffirms the positive conclusions of the present chapter.

It is also worth considering this chapter's material in terms of compliance theory. Clearly, feelings of pride in a unit's history, the desire to live up to the legion's reputation, and the motivational power of shame to discourage soldiers from disgracing that legacy all rely on a sense of attachment to the legion that goes beyond calculation or coercion, and requires genuine moral involvement. But there was also a calculative element: consider

Tacitus' description of Germanicus' appeal to the rebellious legions cited above: *illa signis a Tiberio acceptis, tu tot proeliorum socia, tot praemiis aucta* ('you who received your standards from Tiberius, you who have shared so many battles and been enriched by so many rewards').<sup>111</sup> Germanicus combines appeals to the religiously significant standards and unit history with a reminder of the material benefits which previous loyalty had accrued. The fact that the legionary was encouraged to identify his own self-interest – whether pecuniary or moral – with that of his legion is the truly important thing. Even during revolts, legions maintained their integrity. It is abundantly clear that to the soldiers, legions were not meaningless organisational units imposed upon them; rather, there was a true sense of attachment.

When Augustus consolidated his power, disbanded huge numbers of soldiers, and structured the military as he saw fit, the possibility to either abolish the legion or diminish its significance would have been open to him. The fact that he did not do so makes sense: reinforcing an identity for the legion which extended beyond its present commander, and focusing legionaries' loyalties on this unit, could help avoid a repeat of the circumstances by which Augustus came to power, with armies effectively becoming warbands beholden to powerful commanders (in the next chapter, we will see Piso receive special condemnation for attempting to divide soldiers into *Pisoniani* and *Caesariani*). Other problems, such as desertion, could also be mitigated by encouraging soldiers' attachments to their units. Additionally, this is a form of affiliation potentially less problematic than primary group attachment: whereas the primary group is focused on self-preservation, so that its goals can contradict the overall war effort and lead to fragging or combat avoidance, the goals of the unit are longer-term and less focused on the survival of its members. In contrast to the lack of evidence for the army actively fostering primary group

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<sup>111</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 1.42.

bonds, we see plentiful evidence for this in the case of legion identity, from Marius through Caesar and wilfully maintained into the Principate.

## Chapter 3: Emperor and Army

In this chapter, I examine the Roman legionary's relationship with the authority to whom he was supposedly ultimately loyal: the emperor. The main work on the subject remains J. B. Campbell's *The Emperor and the Roman Army*, an attempt to correct for the complete absence of discussion in Fergus Millar's seminal *The Emperor in the Roman World*.<sup>1</sup> Compared to other aspects of the emperor's role, which have been studied extensively, the emperor's relationship with the army has garnered less sustained discussion. Partly, this neglect results from the assumed primacy of the pecuniary aspect of the emperor-army relationship; all other aspects of the emperor's self-presentation regarding the army, it is often presumed, were only so much propaganda, thinly masking the truth that the soldiers would line up behind the highest bidder. As we shall explore, this reductive analysis of the soldiers' motivations and values is inadequate and fails to explain the events described in our sources.

In much the same way that the establishment of the Principate was, in the words of Fergus Millar, 'a revolution whose public and explicit ideology was, from beginning to end, entirely conservative',<sup>2</sup> the emperor's military role was modelled on completely familiar Republican themes. However, the imperial army was a newly rationalised and increasingly bureaucratic beast,<sup>3</sup> and certainly no Republican commander had ever laid claim to being *imperator* of all of Rome's armies. Among the many roles which the emperor appropriated for himself, this unique position of supreme military control ought to be seen as a significant marker of imperial status, especially as the restoration of peace through the eradication of civil war and the uniting of the empire's forces under a single

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<sup>1</sup> Millar (1977); Campbell (1984).

<sup>2</sup> Millar (2000), 3.

<sup>3</sup> Phang (2008), 3-5.

commander was a key part of the rationale of the early Principate.

The creation of the emperor's position as overall *imperator*, then, involved the construction of an image out of Republican precedents, and the projection of this image to a distant soldiery that would rarely, if ever, see the emperor in person. Since many key parts of the commander's image relied on his personal charisma and involvement in army life, this was no straightforward task, and the emperors used various methods to manifest themselves in the lives of the soldiers – to borrow some current jargon, the emperor became 'a type of "structural object" which also, in instances of actual absence, remained present in the center of power as a ceremonially animated point of reference.'<sup>4</sup> How such a system worked in the case of military command – an area where generals had traditionally gained authority by visibly leading in person – we shall explore below. In doing so, this chapter provides an important supplement to Campbell's approach: Campbell explicitly followed the work of Millar, whose famous claim that 'the emperor was what the emperor did' led to a focus almost solely on the actions and duties of the emperor. Additionally, this approach does not account for the complementary role of the emperor's subjects in constructing his image on their end. In line with the aims of this project, we should also attempt to adopt a bottom-up perspective, and try to glean how soldiers related to the emperor, how they responded to different modes of imperial self-presentation, and to what extent they cared about the state figurehead to whom they were tied by oath. Were soldiers beholden to the emperor in a comparable way to the attachments to *centuria* and legion which we have discussed so far?

Before discussing the emperor's image with the soldiers, we ought to pause to consider a term which is often employed when discussing the emperor's relationship with the army, but which I have so far avoided: propaganda. Although this term is commonly used rather

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<sup>4</sup> Ewald and Norena (2011), 25.

freely, apparently to mean little more than ‘a message from the powerful to a mass audience’, its applicability in pre-modern contexts is problematic – scholars of various periods have pointed to anachronistic implications of the term, such as systematic government control and a coherent ideological framework.<sup>5</sup> A key problem with discussing historic ‘propaganda’ is that insufficient attention is usually paid to the specific ways in which it was both produced and received; discussing the use of the term in studies of early modern royal ritual, Dougal Shaw summarises: ‘In short, historians have neglected to historicize the term propaganda.’<sup>6</sup>

Though many ancient historians have used the term uncritically, others have attempted to qualify it; Burnett, for example, claims that the use of the term ‘seems unexceptionable, provided that we strip it of its two main twentieth-century connotations, namely that of deliberate falsehood and that of a systematic programme for the orchestration of public opinion.’<sup>7</sup> Perhaps it would be wiser to avoid the term altogether, rather than force its accommodation to our purposes by stripping it down to unobjectionable blandness; but Olivier Hekster, writing specifically on the Roman army, warns against excising a potentially useful notion from our theoretical framework, along with all the theories and explanations connected to it.<sup>8</sup>

I choose to avoid the term, since it introduces more confusion than clarity. However, this debate does call attention to some interesting questions: in the absence of propaganda ministries and explicit political ideologies, how and where and by whom was this material produced in the ancient world? Can it be understood entirely as a top-down imposition? To what extent was production controlled and centralised? What was its audience (or audiences)?

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<sup>5</sup> E.g. Anglo (1997), xi.

<sup>6</sup> Shaw (2004), 145.

<sup>7</sup> Burnett (1987), 66.

<sup>8</sup> Hekster (2007), 340-1.

Let us take the example of military coinage to tease out some of these issues. The main mechanism for putting coins into primary circulation was state expenditure, and the army was by far the largest expense – consuming perhaps one half<sup>9</sup> to three quarters<sup>10</sup> of the state's budget. Howgego claims that 'There is scarcely any evidence that coin types were 'targeted', that is to say aimed at the particular group within the community who would receive the coins.'<sup>11</sup> In fact, this has been contradicted by some recent work looking at the distribution of different coin types with relation to the army: Kemmers compares coin ratios in the Rhine Delta and Britain, and points out that the troops involved in Claudius' invasion of Britain seem to have possessed or received many Republican and Claudian coins, but very few coins of Claudius's imperial predecessors.<sup>12</sup> Kemmers' conclusion (a sensible one, though we must always be wary of assigning single explanations to patterns of preservation and distribution) is that this was a deliberate attempt to focus loyalty on Claudius, given his relatively weak image prior to the conquest. Likewise, coins minted in AD 71 were clearly 'diversified', in Kemmers' phrase: in this post-civil war period, Italian coins focus on messages of peace and concord (five types – *Concordia*, *pax*, *aequitas*, *Roma*, and *Iudaea Capta* – constitute 68% of coins); in Wales, where large scale campaigning took place in AD 73 along with Cerialis' campaigns in the north in AD 71, the commonest coin type depicts an eagle on the globe (an image clearly associated with imperial conquest), and the second commonest type depicts *Victoria*.<sup>13</sup>

However, we must ask who precisely was responsible for this targeted distribution. The traditional view of coinage as a medium for the transmission of imperial messages, chosen or approved by the emperor, has been greatly challenged. Particularly significant is

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<sup>9</sup> Hopkins (2002), 199-200.

<sup>10</sup> Duncan-Jones (1994), 45 (72-77%).

<sup>11</sup> Howgego (1995), 71.

<sup>12</sup> Kemmers (2014), 232-3; see also Hekster (2003).

<sup>13</sup> Kemmers (2014), 233-5.

Levick's discussion of how types were chosen, which emphasises the agency of the mint officials, and suggests that they presented flattering and favourable images to the emperor, rather than these being imposed by the imperial court.<sup>14</sup> This important corrective to the fanciful assumption that imperial imagery was propagated at the whim of the emperor himself is important, but to state that coinage was 'intended not as publicity but for internal, domestic, Palace consumption, the equivalent of a family portrait' is too extreme.<sup>15</sup> The notion that emperors and their advisors took no interest in the types of images circulating in the empire is even less likely than the notion that they micromanaged the process. Suetonius makes mention of coins struck by Augustus<sup>16</sup> and Nero<sup>17</sup> with images that they particularly favoured. Wallace-Hadrill is correct that these anecdotes 'characteristically 'collapse' the processes of imperial responsibility by speaking of emperors as 'doing' what was done under them',<sup>18</sup> but they do attest a contemporary perception that emperors took an interest in the images on their coins, and exercised some direction over types.

Another point to bear in mind is that it is impossible that most troop payments were made in newly minted coins: Duncan-Jones argues that new coins could account for no more than around 25% of annual state expenditure on a regular basis.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, the cases of targeted coinage studied by Kemmers and Hekster should not be treated as the norm, but rather as a specific measure which could be employed at specific times – and, I should add, the soldiery was the only body to whom a message could be effectively transmitted via coinage: they were the primary entrance point of coinage into circulation, but beyond the paymaster's desk, coins would have very quickly become swallowed

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<sup>14</sup> Levick (1982).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>16</sup> Suet. *Aug.* 94.12.

<sup>17</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 25.2.

<sup>18</sup> Wallace-Hadrill (1986), 68 n. 6.

<sup>19</sup> Duncan-Jones (1994), 111-2.

within the mass of older coins.<sup>20</sup>

Another type of criticism of coins as bearers of imperial messages, put forward most significantly by A. H. M. Jones, argues that the imagery on coins would have been uninteresting or unintelligible to almost every imperial subject.<sup>21</sup> While it is certainly not the case that coins could be described as ‘newspapers of the day’,<sup>22</sup> or could carry particularly specific information, coins nevertheless used commonly known reference points such as building works,<sup>23</sup> recent victories,<sup>24</sup> or the favour of particular deities.<sup>25</sup> This imagery both reflected and reinforced the broad set of ideas with which an emperor associated himself, and which he reified through other media such as inscriptions, building works, and art; compare Meadows and Williams’ notion of ‘monumentality’ in the coins of the late Republic, attempting not to persuade people but to remind them of certain aspects or events.<sup>26</sup>

Furthermore, if we consider the coins from the point of view of the soldiers, their relevance becomes more obvious; as Jones himself conceded, ‘It may be hazarded that a good many legends were produced for the benefit of the army, for the bulk of the coins must have been minted for issue as pay to the troops’.<sup>27</sup> A good number of legends and images seem clearly targeted for a military audience – the *fides exercituuum* coins of Vitellius<sup>28</sup> or the *fides legionum* coins of Clodius Albinus,<sup>29</sup> for example, or the *praetorianus receptus/imperator receptus*<sup>30</sup> coins of Claudius which acknowledge the

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<sup>20</sup> Noreña (2011), 192-6.

<sup>21</sup> Jones (1956).

<sup>22</sup> Mattingly and Sydenham (1923), 22.

<sup>23</sup> E.g. *RIC* 2, Vespasian 714 (Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus).

<sup>24</sup> E.g. *RIC* 2, Domitian 252 (Germania).

<sup>25</sup> Shotter (1979).

<sup>26</sup> Meadows and Williams (2001).

<sup>27</sup> Jones (1956), 15.

<sup>28</sup> *RIC* 1<sup>2</sup>, Vitellius 28.

<sup>29</sup> *RIC* 4.1, Clodius Albinus 19.

<sup>30</sup> *RIC* 1<sup>2</sup>, 122 nos. 11-12, 23-4 (*praetorianus receptus*); *RIC* 1<sup>2</sup>, 122 nos. 19-20, 25-6; 123 nos. 36-7 (*imperator receptus*).

praetorians as the basis for his rule. Interestingly, the *praetorianus receptus* legend disappears after AD 46, and no praetorians appear on any Claudian coinage after AD 47/8, perhaps indicating Claudius's loosening dependency on the praetorians.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, at this time Claudian coinage begins to trumpet the conquest of Britain, with coins of AD 46/7 showing the triumphal arch, inscribed *DE BRITANN(IS)*, that was only dedicated in AD 51.<sup>32</sup>

Coins displaying military successes under the emperors are very common, and associate the emperors themselves with victories not only through the obverse portrait and titles, but sometimes by having the emperors interact with personifications of defeated peoples, as on the *Iudaea Capta* coins in which Vespasian, in military dress and holding a spear, looms over Iudaea,<sup>33</sup> or coins which show Trajan accepting submission from, or even riding down, Dacian soldiers.<sup>34</sup> A rare coin type of Vespasian displays him as a victorious general with a radiate crown, with the legend *EXERCITVS MOESIC(VS)* on the other side.<sup>35</sup> This is likely to have been a locally minted and issued type used in a donative for one of Vespasian's key power bases. The expression of fidelity to a particular legion, as with Claudius' praetorian coins, is significant; so too is the portrayal of Vespasian as a radiated general, which would appeal to the troops, in contrast with the veristic old man in Vespasian's later non-military portraiture.<sup>36</sup> The proclamation on coinage of a great commander's military prowess was familiar from the late Republic: Marius had been depicted as a *triumphator*, and coinage struck in the lifetime of Sulla shows his two trophies for Chaeronea, depicts him as a *triumphator* crowned by Victory, and illustrates

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<sup>31</sup> Hekster (2003), 28-9.

<sup>32</sup> *RIC* 1<sup>2</sup>, Claudius 23.

<sup>33</sup> *BMC* II, Vespasian 543, 796.

<sup>34</sup> *BMC* III, Trajan 137, 242, 245, 400, 822, 833, 1033; Campbell (1984), 143-4.

<sup>35</sup> Mattingly (1938), pl. VI, 12 = *BMCRE* 2, LXVIII.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 5; Hekster (2003), 27.

his equestrian statue.<sup>37</sup> Elsewhere, the emperor is shown performing the *adlocutio*, raised above the troops he addresses, arm stretched out in the familiar gesture.<sup>38</sup>

Portraits on coins were one way in which the emperor's image was made a part of everyday life, as Fronto vividly points out in a letter to Marcus Aurelius: 'You know how in all money-changers' bureaus, booths, bookstalls, eaves, porches, windows, anywhere and everywhere there are images of you exposed to view'.<sup>39</sup> The proliferation of the emperor's image was a key part of imperial rule – as Caroline Vout summarises:

'To most people in the vast and varied territory of the Roman Empire the emperor was his image. It was this that they garlanded, carried in festivals, dreamed about at bedtime. In other words, it stood (in) for him. This understanding meant that he could simultaneously be with his soldiers in a frontier camp and safe in his palace in Rome.'<sup>40</sup>

The empire was saturated with portraits of emperors and their families – probably hundreds of thousands of images, perhaps millions.<sup>41</sup> As mentioned in the previous chapter, the military standards drew some of their religious aura from the fact that they bore the emperor's image. Campbell argues that although the emperor's image was strongly associated with the standards and kept close by, the existence of *imaginiferi* separate from *signiferi*, and the lack of portraits of the emperor on representations of legionary or auxiliary *signa*, suggest that the *imago imperatoris* was carried on a separate pole.<sup>42</sup> The importance of the imperial image in the military context throughout our period

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<sup>37</sup> Howgego (1995), 68.

<sup>38</sup> E.g. *RIC* 1, Gaius 32.

<sup>39</sup> Fronto, *Ad M. Caes.* 4.12.4: *Scis ut in omnibus argentariis mensulis perguleis taberneis protecteis vestibulis fenestris usquequaque, ubique imagines vestrae sint volgo propositae, male illae quidem pictae pleraeque et crassa, lutea immo.*

<sup>40</sup> Vout (2007), 29.

<sup>41</sup> Fittschen (2011), 221.

<sup>42</sup> Campbell (1984), 96-7.

is clear, from Tacitus' description of soldiers displaying their disaffection with Galba by stoning his images,<sup>43</sup> to Herodian's description of the praetorians signalling their proclamation of Didius Julianus as emperor by raising standards to which images of Julianus had been attached.<sup>44</sup>

A particularly interesting example of an imperial image from an army context is the so-called Tel Shalem Hadrian, a bronze head of Hadrian found with a fragmentary bronze cuirassed torso. Located in a central room (possibly the *principia*) of a late first or early second century AD military camp which was probably occupied by a vexillation of *legio VI ferrata*, the statue seems to have been set up in association with Hadrian's successful suppression of the Bar Kochba revolt in the region.<sup>45</sup> Richard Gergel has argued that although the head is of contemporary Roman origin, the cuirassed body is from the Hellenistic period, making the statue a pastiche.<sup>46</sup> Gergel's argument convincingly explains the incongruities of the piece, and the obscure imagery of the breastplate which so exercised Foerster in his earlier assessment, but I suggest that the choice of body was not thoughtless: the breastplate's six heroically nude warriors convey the theme of military glory – here against the Jewish rebels – and the very lack of clear narrative content, remarked upon by Gergel, may have made this a smart piece to appropriate.<sup>47</sup>

This piece of sculpture gives some fascinating insights into the emperor's relationship with the army. It highlights a key issue alluded to above: imperial imagery was not always produced or designed at the imperial court, but could be created – in all sorts of ways – by the emperor's subjects around the empire. Who precisely was responsible for assembling the piece is unclear: Gergel suggests that it may have been the legionaries

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<sup>43</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 1.55.

<sup>44</sup> Herod. 2.6.11.

<sup>45</sup> Foerster (1986).

<sup>46</sup> Gergel (1991).

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 245.

themselves.<sup>48</sup> Their detachment commander may have been of senatorial rank, or only a centurion;<sup>49</sup> too little is known about the occupants of this particular camp to say.<sup>50</sup> In any case, here we see a very striking example of a local unit honouring the emperor on its own initiative, in a highly unusual and creative way; clearly the soldiers were more than the passive recipients of imperial ‘propaganda’.

Imperial imagery in the military context is thus a rich and complex topic. Let us now discuss the various aspects of the emperor’s self-presentation to the troops, which I have organised under three headings: the emperor as benefactor, as *imperator*, and as *commilito*. It should be borne in mind that not all aspects of the emperor’s military self-presentation had the primary purpose of appealing to the troops; he also had to be palatable to the aristocracy by fulfilling the traditional expectations for a commander, and not being too indulgent to men distrusted and despised by the senatorial class.<sup>51</sup>

### The Emperor as Benefactor

Before discussing the emperor as *imperator* and *commilito*, and the difficulties faced in reconciling these two positions, it makes sense to begin by discussing the emperor as the soldiers’ benefactor, and addressing the extent to which we ought to understand him as their patron. Many scholars have argued that the emperor’s relationship with his soldiers is best understood in terms of the Roman system of patronage and its system of ties of obligation.<sup>52</sup> This notion has been subject to some debate, with regard both to the army and to the emperor’s subjects more generally – Veyne states flatly that ‘As for the alleged

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 249.

<sup>49</sup> Tully (2004).

<sup>50</sup> Cotton (2000), 352-3.

<sup>51</sup> Campbell (1984), 18; Mattern (1999), 141-2.

<sup>52</sup> Phang (2008), 28.

relations of clientage between the Emperor and his subjects or soldiers, these were non-existent: the *donativum* was not a pledge of such bonds. To suppose that an immense state, in which the relations between sovereign and subject are relations of anonymous obedience, can be compared to a band of followers is frankly to lose one's sense of historical realities.<sup>53</sup> In contrast to those who would view the emperor as a patron and his subjects as clients (principally Premerstein), Veyne argues that the emperor's gift-giving was a quasi-automatic process which did not create personal relationships.<sup>54</sup>

Reacting against Veyne, Richard Saller points out that in fact – in accordance with the wide scope for personal discretion which characterises Weberian patrimonial bureaucracies – emperors actually had a great number of *ad hominem* or *ad civitatem* grants at their disposal in addition to regular administrative mechanisms.<sup>55</sup> Although the term *beneficium* could be used in an entirely banal sense, it is clear from evidence such as Pliny's letters that a great many *beneficia* were granted at the emperor's discretion, and the many surviving offerings of thanks to the emperor suggest active gratitude and the fulfilment of a reciprocal exchange, rather than straightforward completion of routine administrative functions.<sup>56</sup>

As far as the donative goes, Veyne's summary is unobjectionable: 'The *donativum* had enabled Augustus to demonstrate to everyone that the army depended on him alone,' and thereafter, in Veyne's view, the donative became a simple entitlement in the eyes of the legions – a right impossible to withhold, but insignificant in its bestowal (except to the praetorians, who played an increasingly active role in the process of succession and demanded active recognition of their political prestige).<sup>57</sup> The conception of the donative

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<sup>53</sup> Veyne (1990), 346.

<sup>54</sup> Roller (2001), 131.

<sup>55</sup> Saller (1982), 34.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 34-9.

<sup>57</sup> Veyne (1990), 341-3.

as expected and automatic is exemplified well in Herodian's description of how Didius Julianus, faced with the imminent arrival of his rival Severus, attempted to gain the goodwill (*εὖνοια*) of the praetorians with a cash distribution; but they felt no obligation (*χάρις*) to him, because they believed he was only paying money which they were already owed.<sup>58</sup>

However, looking beyond the donative, Saller's argument is borne out well in a consideration of the emperor's patrimonial relationship with the army (which assuredly consisted of far more than the granting of donatives). Occasional literary references make bonds of obligation quite clear, most famously in the story of one of Augustus' veterans asking the emperor to represent him in court. When Augustus sent a friend in his stead, the soldier replied that he had never sent a replacement to battle, but had personally faced dangers on Augustus' behalf – the emperor, feeling obliged to reciprocate, came to the soldier's defence.<sup>59</sup> The man may be the Scutarius mentioned by Suetonius, whom the author explicitly refers to as a *cliens* of the emperor.<sup>60</sup> In the incident discussed in the previous chapter, in which Germanicus attempts to shame the first and twentieth legions by reminding the former of their service under Tiberius, and the latter the many battles shared and *praemia* earned alongside Germanicus, he asks with outrage what kind of *gratia* their mutiny constitutes.<sup>61</sup> The prince concedes that loyal service is conditional on the emperor and his commanders providing military success and rewards; here, he claims that these conditions have been fulfilled, but the appropriate loyalty not returned.

The most obvious way that soldiers were obligated to the emperor, beyond the donative, was their regular pay and, more importantly, their bonuses. A legionary's annual

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<sup>58</sup> Herod. 2.11.7-8.

<sup>59</sup> Dio 55.4.2. This story bears resemblance to other tales of rulers being upbraided for a lack of conscientiousness by lowly subjects, and then, recognising their duties, offering assistance: see Millar (1992), 3-4.

<sup>60</sup> Suet. *Aug.* 56.4.

<sup>61</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 1.42.

pay was modest, but his discharge bonus was huge – worth thirteen years’ salary by the end of Augustus’ reign – and thus the soldier had an incentive to serve loyally until the end of his term.<sup>62</sup> The *Digest* states that the punishment for a legion in revolt, or multiple soldiers conspiring to commit a crime, is disbandment (and thus the loss of proper discharge privileges),<sup>63</sup> and Suetonius states that Augustus punished with ignominious discharge those units which petulantly demanded their bonuses, ‘without the rewards usually earned through service’.<sup>64</sup> In attempting to dissuade the mutineers in AD 14, one of the centurions asks ‘Will Percennius and Vibulenus give pay to the soldiers and land to those who have earned their discharge? In a word, are they, instead of the Neros and the Drusi, to control the empire of the Roman people?’<sup>65</sup> This encapsulates the aim of the Augustan system: to force soldiers to be entirely reliant on the imperial house for their emoluments, which they risked losing by acts of disloyalty. The soldiers’ loyalty to the emperor as a paymaster thus included a calculative element – disloyalty risked ignominious discharge – as well as a deeper patronal bond. The bond of obligation resulting from the remuneration provided by the emperor is exemplified well in an inscription set up by the *optiones* of *III Augusta*, stating ‘For the safety of the emperors, the *optiones* have established a shrine with statues and images of the divine house, as well as their protective gods, out of the most generous pay and benefits which they confer upon them’ (*ex largissimis stipendiis et liberalitatibus quae in eos conferunt*).<sup>66</sup>

Nor should we forget that the material benefits which soldiers received did not consist solely of money. There were opportunities for social advancement, and healthcare and accommodation were provided. Indeed, given the general standard of living in the

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<sup>62</sup> Lendon (1997), 254-5.

<sup>63</sup> *D.* 49.16.3.21.

<sup>64</sup> *Suet. Aug.* 24.2.

<sup>65</sup> *Tac. Ann.* 1.28: *Percennius et Vibulenus stipendia militibus, agros emeritis largientur? denique pro Neronibus et Drusis imperium populi Romani capessent?*

<sup>66</sup> *CIL VIII*, 2554.

ancient world, we ought not underestimate how attractive the stability of military life, where one was provided with everything necessary, might be. There is evidence for standardisation in certain aspects of military provisions, such as the number and pattern of hobnails in military boots; such regularity would impress upon soldiers that their equipment was provided to them by the state, and therefore the emperor.<sup>67</sup>

Additionally, the emperors became responsible for funding the soldiers' annual furlough. According to Tacitus, the need to effectively bribe the centurions for furlough was a major cause of dissension among the men, until Otho promised to pay the annual sums from his own purse – a practice followed by subsequent *boni principes* (the passage is ambiguous as to whether it was immediately continued by the Flavians, or was only later instituted under Nerva and Trajan).<sup>68</sup>

The granting of decorations or *dona* was another right monopolised by the imperial household: as Maxfield summarises, 'The epigraphic evidence for the entire imperial period is unanimous on the point that it was the emperor or a member of the imperial family who granted *dona*'.<sup>69</sup> A few inscriptions name other members of the imperial family as granting the *dona*, but the vast majority record the emperor himself, with his full name and titles. The emperor could personally distribute some decorations if he happened to be personally present on campaign, or if he heard of the soldier's exploits – Tiberius, for instance, awarded the civic crown to an ordinary soldier named Helvius Rufus who had saved the life of another citizen, and complained that the proconsul had only rewarded him with a neck-chain and a spear.<sup>70</sup> In most cases, of course, the emperor would not be personally involved in the granting of decorations; the important point, as Campbell notes, is that the soldiers associated military decorations with the emperor, who was their

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<sup>67</sup> Van Driel-Murray (1985), 54.

<sup>68</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 1.46. On furlough, Speidel (1985).

<sup>69</sup> Maxfield (1981), 117; Lendon (1997), 260-1.

<sup>70</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 3.21.

ultimate source and arbiter.<sup>71</sup> This was undoubtedly the intention of the emperors, as it mitigated the possibilities for army commanders to dislodge soldierly loyalty through grants of rewards; any largesse was the emperor's largesse.

We might draw an analogy between the army as a 'constituency' and the urban *plebs* – a privileged group within both the urban population of Rome and the wider population of the empire which was routinely singled out for benefaction by the emperor, in the forms of cash and grain distributions, public entertainments, and public building works.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, it may be stated that the *plebs*, the aristocracy, and the army were the three essential constituencies for imperial rule.<sup>73</sup> Like the *plebs*, the army came to expect the regular fulfilment of certain kinds of imperial generosity which had become routinised, but they also had a dynamic relationship which could benefit from special attention and charismatic self-presentation. Phang sensibly concludes that we are dealing with 'a patrimonial bureaucracy that included both formally rational and traditional elements of authority': the charismatic personal authority of commanding figures existed alongside formally rational elements of documentation, accounting, and work-discipline.<sup>74</sup>

Whether or not we describe the emperor as a patron in the traditional sense, it is clear that great efforts were made to closely associate the emperor with remunerative motivation. The monopolisation of *dona*, the positioning of the emperor as paymaster, and the eventual funding of furlough were measures designed to encourage soldiers to see their financial success as dependent on the emperor. We must presume that many emperors and imperial advisors shared the view of the soldiers so prevalent in our literary sources, as grasping and greedy – in other words, as primarily motivated by remunerative concerns. The emperor's efforts to cast himself as the sole source of such rewards makes sense as a

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<sup>71</sup> Campbell (1984), 199-200.

<sup>72</sup> Purcell (1994), 644-6; Ewald and Noreña (2011), 6.

<sup>73</sup> Lendon (1997), 120-9, 237.

<sup>74</sup> Phang (2008), 27-9.

response, nicely summarised in the final words of Septimius Severus to his two sons:

‘Maintain harmony, enrich the soldiers, and scorn all others’.<sup>75</sup>

### The Emperor as Commander

As mentioned above, the emperor’s claim to be *imperator* of all of Rome’s armies was a key aspect of his self-definition. Following from this, the emperor monopolised military glory: whereas it had formerly been the case that the general in charge of a campaign would be acclaimed triumphator by his soldiers, and be honoured accordingly, that privilege became the emperor’s alone.<sup>76</sup> As Tacitus summarises when describing Domitian’s jealous reaction to Agricola’s military successes in Britain, ‘the greatness of a good commander belonged to the emperor’ (*ducis boni imperatoriam virtutem esse*).<sup>77</sup>

As well as establishing themselves as the prime recipients of military glory, emperors positioned themselves as guaranteeing the safety of the soldiers. The notion developed that a good campaign was one with few losses; Claudius, for instance, boasted on his triumphal arch that he captured Britain *sine ulla iactura*.<sup>78</sup> A common phrase affected by the emperors was ‘If you and our children are in health, it is well; I and the legions are in health’; Dio claims that when many Roman soldiers died during the Bar Kochba Revolt, Hadrian omitted to use the phrase when writing to the Senate.<sup>79</sup>

Every soldier was personally bound to the emperor through the military oath (*sacramentum*). An oath upon enlistment had been in place since the mid-Republic, and began to include personal obligations to specific commanders in the late Republic,

<sup>75</sup> Dio 77.15.2: ὁμονοεῖτε, τοὺς στρατιώτας πλουτίζετε, τῶν ἄλλων πάντων καταφρονεῖτε.

<sup>76</sup> Maxfield (1981), 116-9.

<sup>77</sup> Tac. Ag. 39.3.

<sup>78</sup> ILS 216; Harris (2006), 313.

<sup>79</sup> Dio. 69.14.3: πολλοὶ μέντοι ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ τούτῳ καὶ τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἀπώλοντο· διὸ καὶ ὁ Ἀδριανὸς γράφων πρὸς τὴν βουλὴν οὐκ ἐχρήσατο τῷ προοιμίῳ τῷ συνήθει τοῖς αὐτοκράτορσιν, ὅτι εἰ αὐτοὶ τε καὶ οἱ παῖδες ὑμῶν ὑγιαίνετε, εὖ ἂν ἔχοι· ἐγὼ καὶ τὰ στρατεύματα ὑγιαίνομεν.

beginning with Sulla.<sup>80</sup> In the imperial period, the oath was sworn to the emperor, though we have no record of its precise wording. Of the Republican oath, Livy states that soldiers swore ‘that they would assemble at the command of the consuls, and not depart without orders’,<sup>81</sup> while Polybius writes that each soldier swore that he would ‘obey his officers and execute their orders as far as is in his power’.<sup>82</sup> In the imperial era, Epictetus claims that soldiers swore ‘to uphold the safety of the emperor above all else’;<sup>83</sup> presumably the oath also contained a commitment not to desert, as it had in its Republican iteration, and to follow the code of discipline, but we have no evidence on this.<sup>84</sup> Since the oath was now personal, it was sworn anew upon the accession of a new emperor, and again every year on the anniversary of the accession. Pliny wrote to Trajan after one such anniversary, informing the emperor of the devotion with which the ceremony had been observed.<sup>85</sup>

Modern writers, by and large, accept that the oath carried genuine significance, but its importance is difficult to quantify.<sup>86</sup> Campbell suggests that the largely poorly-educated soldiery might have had ‘a simple-minded piety [which] persuaded them to have some respect for the oaths they swore to the emperor’.<sup>87</sup> It is not necessary to pass such a judgement on the intellectual sophistication of the soldiers to conceive that any person in a society which took oaths seriously, imbued them with serious religious meaning, and associated their breakage with divine censure would regard the *sacramentum* with real respect. Seneca refers to desertion with the term *nefas* – sacrilege;<sup>88</sup> Herodian uses the term *ἀσέβεια* when referring to the breaking of the oath.<sup>89</sup> Seneca also says the oath and

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<sup>80</sup> Plut. *Sull.* 27.4; Campbell (1984), 19-23.

<sup>81</sup> Liv. 22.38.3: *iussu consulum conventuros neque iniussu abituros.*

<sup>82</sup> Polyb. 6.21: *πειθαρχήσῃν καὶ ποιήσῃν τὸ προσταττόμενον ὑπὸ τῶν ἀρχόντων κατὰ δύναμιν.*

<sup>83</sup> 1.14.15.

<sup>84</sup> Campbell (1984), 23-8 on the oath in the imperial period.

<sup>85</sup> Plin. *Ep.* 10.52.

<sup>86</sup> E.g. Lendon (1997), 253.

<sup>87</sup> Campbell (1984), 30.

<sup>88</sup> Sen. *Ep.* 95.35.

<sup>89</sup> Herod. 2.13.8.

the horror of desertion, along with love of the standards, was the soldier's 'primary bond' (*primum militiae vinculum*).<sup>90</sup>

Even Tacitus, for all his cynicism towards soldiers, treats the sacramentum as something which commanded genuine reverence. He describes the common soldiers proclaiming Otho emperor in a frenzy of enthusiasm, stating that 'as soon as they saw any of the soldiers who were flowing in, they seized him, embraced him, put him close to Otho, and dictated to him the oath';<sup>91</sup> these, he claims, 'were not, as in a popular assembly or mob, various idle expressions of flattery' (*variis segni adulatione vocibus*), but were sincere. He portrays the disaffected German legionaries as genuinely reluctant to swear the oath to Galba,<sup>92</sup> and in a particularly curious scene, describes the reluctant soldiers of Hordeonius Flaccus mumbling or passing over in silence the name of Vespasian when asked to give him their loyalty instead of Vitellius.<sup>93</sup> Tacitus clearly recognised that however changeable loyalties might be in a civil war, the oath held real power.

There is much we can learn about imperial self-presentation and the control of soldiers' loyalties from the fascinating text of the *Senatus Consultum de Cn. Pisone Patre*. The text is a decree of the Senate rather than a direct address from the emperor, but both the proceedings of the trial and the production of the decree ought to be seen as carefully managed and directed according to Tiberius' wishes. Tiberius' speech before the trial, as reported by Tacitus, draws attention to the fact that the case had been brought to the Senate rather than the courts, and emphasises that this occurred only with those cases in which the emperor had a particular interest.<sup>94</sup> The decree is quite unabashed in describing the extent

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<sup>90</sup> Sen. Ep. 95.35.

<sup>91</sup> Tac. Hist. 1.36: *sed ut quemque adfluentium militum aspexerant, prensare manibus, complecti armis, conlocare iuxta, praeire sacramentum.*

<sup>92</sup> Tac. Hist. 1.55.

<sup>93</sup> Tac. Hist. 4.31: *et cum cetera iuris iurandi verba conciperent, Vespasiani nomen haesitantes aut levi murmure et plerumque silentio transmittabant.*

<sup>94</sup> Tac. Ann. 3.12; Lott (2012), 256-7.

to which Tiberius directed proceedings, e.g. lines 15-17: '(the Senate and people give thanks) to Tiberius Caesar Augustus, their own *princeps*, because he made available to the Senate everything necessary for seeking out the truth.'<sup>95</sup>

Due to the nature of Piso's conspiracy, which involved the subversion of military discipline, the soldiers constitute one of the main audiences for the text, as shown by the order to post a copy of the decree in the *hiberna* of every legion, near the standards.<sup>96</sup> Despite the fact that this text is clearly intended to ward off future attempts at rebellion and disloyalty to the imperial house, it expresses no disapproval of any soldierly conduct during Piso's rebellion: rather than treating the soldiers as active participants, the decree paints them as being unwittingly corrupted (*corrupisset*) by Piso, in one of only three sections of the text which mentions the soldiery (52-7). In the other two sections, the crucifixion of a centurion is singled out as one of Piso's most heinous crimes (51-2), and the soldiers who refused to follow Piso are praised (159-163). Given the brutality of Roman military discipline generally, it would not be unexpected to find a condemnation of the rebellious soldiers, or some type of indication of the possible consequences of disloyalty to the emperor. But instead, this text, at least insofar as it addresses the soldiers, takes a rather less direct approach, fitting with the tone of the text as a whole – 'a hymn to harmony and reconciliation, and a guide and exhortation to proper Roman behaviour'.<sup>97</sup> Absent is the typical aristocratic view of the soldiers as a fickle and dangerous mob which required discipline and control;<sup>98</sup> here the soldiery as a whole is implicitly treated as being on the side of the emperor and Senate, and Piso is condemned for his attempt to divide the soldiers into *Pisoniani* and *Caesariani* (lines 55-7).

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<sup>95</sup> *Ti. Caesari Augusto principi suo quod earum rerum omnium, quae ad explorandum veritatem necessariae fuerunt, copiam senatui fecerit.*

<sup>96</sup> *SCPP* 1. 172.

<sup>97</sup> Champlin (1999), 122.

<sup>98</sup> Campbell (1984), 9-10.

Although the text does remove responsibility from the soldiers by claiming that they were corrupted, it claims that ‘it was their concern and duty (*curae atque officii*) that those who at any time were in command should have most authority who with the most loyal devotion had cherished the name of the Caesars’; in other words, the soldiers themselves had a responsibility to direct their fealty to those commanders most committed to the emperor.<sup>99</sup> The text thus makes a normative appeal to the legionaries: they should value loyalty to the emperor, and moreover, they should be assessing their own commanders on this quality! The jurist Modestinus would later emphasise that despite soldiers’ usual inability to bring accusations to court on behalf of others, they were highly encouraged to do so in cases of treason against the emperor.<sup>100</sup>

The posting of the *Senatus Consultum* in written form is a fascinating detail. Was this purely symbolic, or a genuine attempt to address legionaries with the written word? There are examples from the late Republic of *litterae* or *biblia* being used to encourage sedition between rival Roman armies.<sup>101</sup> However, we do not need to suppose that the legionaries would read these ‘pamphlets’ themselves.<sup>102</sup> Although it would have been dangerous to stand up and address a large number of soldiers with seditious material, we could plausibly imagine literate soldiers sharing these texts with their *contubernium* or *centuria*. The contemporary Nicolaus of Damascus, commenting on Augustus’ use of written material at Brundisium, says that his agents were to scatter the documents around, so that the soldiers might pick them up and read them (*ταῦτα γράψαντας διαρρῖψαι πολλαχοῦ, ὡς διαράμενοι οἱ ἄνθρωποι τὰ γράμματα ἀναγινώσκοιεν*).<sup>103</sup> This would certainly suggest that a fair number of ordinary soldiers might be able to read such

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<sup>99</sup> *SCPP*, lines 163-5.

<sup>100</sup> *D.* 48.4.7.1: *Sed et milites, qui causas alias defendere non possunt: nam qui pro pace excubant, magis magisque ad hanc accusationem admittendi sunt.*

<sup>101</sup> Dio 43.5, 47.48, 51.10; *B. Afr.* 32; *App. BC.* 3.44.

<sup>102</sup> Harris (1989), 253.

<sup>103</sup> *FGrH* 90 F 130 (31).

material.

We read of such pamphleteering only in the context of the civil wars, and it is rare that such methods would have been necessary in any other situation. Nevertheless, there were other texts intended to be read by the troops, such as the *senatus consultum* or the inscribed *adlocutio* at Lambaesis. The Perusine *glandes* – sling bullets inscribed with crude messages – may imply some level of literacy among the common soldiers; though we might equally assume that these oddities were produced for the amusement of a small number of literate officers.<sup>104</sup> Any consideration of evidence from the late Republic must also account for the fact that the circumstances of the civil wars, and the enormous enlistment numbers, meant that literate members of Roman society may have been more prominently represented among the soldiery. Estimating literacy among the legionaries of the Principate depends on what one judges the social background of most legionaries to have been – an almost impossible task, as explored in the next chapter. The military environment, with its use of documentation and the opportunities for career advancement associated with the ability to write, would have encouraged the attainment of literacy; however, the case of Julius Apollinaris, fast-tracked to the post of *librarius* and exemption from manual labour immediately upon enlistment, suggests that literacy could be a rare skill.<sup>105</sup>

Returning to the SCPP, it is thus likely that only the leading men in each *centuria* – the centurion, *optio*, *signifer*, and those literate men who, like Julius Apollinaris, found themselves in administrative *immunis* roles and probably had aspirations to become officers – were able to read the text. Naturally enough, these men of authority and influence were assumed to be the ones who would be central to any potential rebellion, and

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<sup>104</sup> Hallett (1977).

<sup>105</sup> *P. Mich.* VIII. 466; see also chapter 4 below.

therefore important to address. Even if most soldiers were only vaguely appraised of the contents of the document, the negative portrait of Piso aimed to set them against any such usurpers in their own midst, and the power of the emperor to overcome any conspiracy was highlighted.

The SCPP, then, provides an important insight into the conception of the emperor's relationship with the soldiers at an early stage. One aspect of this is the concept of the emperor as the font of military *disciplina*, made explicit when Piso is accused of corrupting the *militarem disciplinam a divo Augusto institutam et servatam a Ti. Caesare Augusto*,<sup>106</sup> Tacitus adds that through his indulgence, Piso began to be called *parens legionum* among the men.<sup>107</sup> The mention of Augustus's connection to *disciplina* is also mentioned in the military section of the *Digest (disciplina Augusti)*,<sup>108</sup> which also contains references to imperial edicts or rescripts, indicating the role of the emperor as the final arbiter of disciplinary procedures across the empire.<sup>109</sup>

Another text which exemplifies the emperor's role as commander is Hadrian's *adlocutio* at Lambaesis.<sup>110</sup> Here, the emperor is in a position of judgement, able to assess, praise, and reprimand as he sees fit. Although the tone is consistently positive (naturally enough, since the proud legion chose to have the speech inscribed), it is implied that the emperor could express disapproval if he disliked the display, as when Hadrian explains that neither he nor Trajan enjoyed witnessing the *contrari discursus*,<sup>111</sup> and he claims when praising *ala I Pannoniorum* that 'Had anything lacked, I would note it; had anything stood out, I would mention it.'<sup>112</sup> A mild admonition is perhaps intended with the phrase *tarde*

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<sup>106</sup> SCPP 1. 52-3.

<sup>107</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 2.55.

<sup>108</sup> *D.* 49.16.12.1.

<sup>109</sup> E.g. 49.16.3, 49.16.4.5; see also chapter 5 below.

<sup>110</sup> *ILS* 2487; Speidel (2006).

<sup>111</sup> Speidel (2006), 13; field 26, lines 4-5.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 14; field 29, lines 5-6.

*iunxistis* (you were slow to close ranks), followed plausibly by *erumpetis vehementius* (you will break out more quickly).<sup>113</sup> Hadrian also gives advice and instruction, as when describing how cavalymen should and should not execute a charge.<sup>114</sup> Overall, Hadrian presents himself as a fair arbiter, carefully considering his praise – and qualifying it where necessary, as when he claims that the legionary horsemen made the difficult task of spear-throwing even more difficult by doing so in armour, and thus losing elegance.<sup>115</sup> He also appears as a near-omniscient figure, perfectly understanding both military science and the situation of the units under his authority.

The emperor-as-commander trope makes an interesting appeal to the soldiers, in some ways combining punitive and normative motivation. The all-seeing, authoritative emperor, his command only delegated to his generals, the ultimate font of *disciplina*, bound to the soldiers by a sacred oath, was naturally an intimidating figure whom the soldiers would fear to disobey. On the other hand, the emperor's authority was presented as stemming from his military competence – as a figure who would guarantee the success of military goals, who valued the soldiers' safety, and as someone who understood and shared the military values of the soldiers.

### The Emperor as Fellow-Soldier

In the late Republic, a mutual dependency developed between soldiers and their commanders: soldiers increasingly looked to powerful commanders to provide for them, and would wed themselves to their commanders' political causes; the commanders, in turn, had to maintain the confidence of their soldierly support bases. In this situation, commanders who presented themselves as sharing the burdens of the soldiers not only

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<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 12; field 22, lines 5-7.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 13; field 26, lines 5-9.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 9; field 6, lines 8-9.

showed the sympathy for toils that has always inspired appreciation and obedience, but also illustrated to the men that their interests were united with those of their commander. Hence Marius ate common bread, slept on a simple pallet, and took part in construction works;<sup>116</sup> Mark Antony shared exercises with his men, and joked with them;<sup>117</sup> Julius Caesar was loved by his soldiers, whom he ‘never called *militēs* in his speeches, but rather used the more flattering term *commilitōnes*’.<sup>118</sup>

It is notable that Augustus, however, who established many precedents for imperial self-presentation, is said never to have called soldiers *commilitōnes* after the civil wars (Suetonius implies that he had used the term previously).<sup>119</sup> Suetonius claims that he thought the term *ambitiosius... quam aut ratio militaris aut temporum quies aut sua domusque suae maiestas postulare*; Campbell translates *ambitiosius* as ‘more ostentatious’,<sup>120</sup> but ‘more eager for approval’ is more accurate – Suetonius elsewhere furnishes numerous examples of how Augustus would not always indulge the desires of the people, in order to demonstrate that he was a *salubrem magis quam ambitiosum principem*.<sup>121</sup> In the aftermath of the civil wars, when one of the key foundations of Augustus’ new political order was his assurance of peace, it was important for him to show elites that he was in control of the soldiers rather than subject to their whims – and given his exertions in securing discharge bonuses and land for his veterans, under considerable pressure from those very men, this probably required some proving.<sup>122</sup>

Indeed, the sources make no mention of the term *commilito* until the civil wars of AD 68-9, in the context of an explicit contest for soldierly loyalty. As Campbell argues,

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<sup>116</sup> Plut. *Mar.* 7.

<sup>117</sup> Plut. *Ant.* 4, 6.5.

<sup>118</sup> Suet. *Iul.* 67: *nec milites eos pro contione, sed blandiore nomine commilitōnes appellabat.*

<sup>119</sup> Suet. *Aug.* 25.1.

<sup>120</sup> Campbell (1984), 33.

<sup>121</sup> Suet. *Aug.* 42.1.

<sup>122</sup> E.g. App. *BC.* 5.12-16.

this does not mean that it was not used previously, and regardless of whether this exact term was employed, the *commilito* tradition can certainly be seen in the attempts by emperors like Claudius to at least appear to have had some personal involvement in military activity.<sup>123</sup> Nor was *commilito* the only term an emperor might use to communicate the same notion – Otho tried to win the favour of his soldiers by calling them *contubernales*.<sup>124</sup>

In line with other measures taken to make the soldiers dependent on their emperor – making the *princeps* the font of pay, bonuses, and decorations, the key figure in the military oath, and the ultimate commander of all military forces – it made sense for emperors to adopt the *commilito* tradition in order to demonstrate the unity of their interests with those of the soldiers. After all, if the emperor was a fellow soldier, what sense was there in rebelling against him? This logic seems to be evident when Tiberius, addressing the mutinous Pannonian legions through Drusus, claimed that he ‘had a special care for the brave legions with which he had endured a number of campaigns’, and promised to bring their concerns before the Senate – he himself was on their side.<sup>125</sup> In contrast, Galba’s last words before being murdered by his own troops (at least in one tradition) illustrate his failure to convince the troops that their interests were in common: ‘What are you doing, fellow soldiers? I am yours, and you are mine.’<sup>126</sup>

Many emperors made conspicuous efforts to join their soldiers on campaign and to present themselves in person. Domitian, for instance, took personal charge of campaigns as often as possible, fighting the Chatti in AD 83, the Dacians from AD 85-6, the rebellion of Saturninus in AD 89, as well as fighting against the Chatti and visiting Pannonia, and

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<sup>123</sup> Suet. *Claud.* 17; Dio 60.21.

<sup>124</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 1.23.

<sup>125</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 1.25: *praecipuam ipsi fortissimarum legionum curam, quibuscum plurima bella toleravisset.*

<sup>126</sup> Suet. *Gal.* 20.1: *quid agitis commilitones? ego vester sum et vos mei.*

fighting the Sarmatians in AD 92.<sup>127</sup> Of course, it was impossible for any emperor – even Hadrian, whose tours of the provinces were relatively exceptional – to appear in person before every far-flung unit in the army on anything like a regular basis. The vast majority of soldiers would never see the emperor in person.

However, the physical distance of the emperor need not have been a disadvantage – rather than making him a meaningless figure in the soldiers’ minds, his physical remoteness enhanced the reverence with which he was regarded. As a figure encountered through grandiose images and monumental works, interacted with through solemn ceremony, the emperor’s self-presentation could hardly be undermined by reality. Tacitus, considering Tiberius’ deliberations on how to terminate the mutinies of AD 14, comments that the emperor declined to intervene in person, because his *maiestas* was greatest at a distance.<sup>128</sup> The projection of images rather than personal intervention, then, was not always a matter of practical necessity, but could be a calculated attempt to overawe the soldiers. With this in mind, the extent to which the emperor-as-*commilito* was a literary topos rather than a reality becomes a less significant question: its power over the soldiers was always as a projected image. The soldiers, too, participated in the construction of the *commilito* image: one sailor boasted of having served 17 years ‘at the side of the emperor’ (*ad latus Augusti*), perpetuating the idea of the soldier-emperor relationship being one of comrades-in-arms.<sup>129</sup>

Though the tropes of the *commilito* emperor were easy enough to adopt (and, as has often been pointed out, an emperor on campaign might make a show of indulging in common fare and exercises before returning to more luxurious conditions),<sup>130</sup> it was nonetheless a challenge to balance this aspect of imperial self-presentation with the aspects

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<sup>127</sup> Campbell (1984), 44.

<sup>128</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 1.47.

<sup>129</sup> *ILS* 2905.

<sup>130</sup> Phang (2008), 277 n. 182.

of *imperator* and enforcer of *disciplina*. Herodian's description of the accession of Commodus illustrates the range of ways that an emperor needed to appear before the soldiers. After spending a few days making arrangements for his father's funeral, his advisers (*φίλοι*) brought him before the troops (given that Commodus was well-known to the troops and his succession was clear, it was not required on this occasion for the new emperor to appear immediately before the soldiers).<sup>131</sup> Here, he addressed the troops and distributed money, 'as is usual for those who succeed to the throne' (*ὡς ἔθος ἐστὶ τοῖς βασιλείαν διαδεχομένοις*). After performing sacrifices, he mounted a platform in the middle of the camp and, surrounded by his father's advisers, gave a speech which exemplifies the difficulties of appearing as both *commilito* and *imperator*: on the one hand, he repeatedly emphasises that his father loved Commodus and the soldiers alike – Commodus recalls how his father would call him *συστρατιώτης* rather than son,<sup>132</sup> and describes the deified Marcus as their common father (*κοινοῦ πατρὸς*).<sup>133</sup> On the other hand, he emphasises that his birth puts him in a position of unique authority: 'No commoner's swaddling clothes for me; the imperial purple lay waiting for me the moment I was born; on that day I was both man and emperor... not a ruler presented to you, but born to you (*οὐ δοθέντα ὑμῖν ἀλλὰ γεννηθέντα αὐτοκράτορα*).'<sup>134</sup>

The contradictions and difficulties of presenting oneself as both *imperator* and *commilito* constitute another reminder that the emperor's relationship with the army drew on various Republican precedents, and was not necessarily carefully constructed. That said, this multifaceted relationship gave an emperor some flexibility in his self-presentation depending on the needs of any given situation, and in order to appeal to different audiences. Although the emperor addressed the army as a specific audience, the

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<sup>131</sup> 1.5.1.

<sup>132</sup> 1.5.3.

<sup>133</sup> 1.5.7.

<sup>134</sup> 1.5.6. See Kemezis (2020), 253ff on this episode.

modes in which he presented himself mirrored his modes of self-presentation towards wider society. In *Constructing Autocracy*, Matthew Roller focuses on three figures to which the Julio-Claudian emperors assimilated themselves: the gift-giver, the master, and the father (all familiar figures prior to the Principate).<sup>135</sup> These were also aspects of the emperor's relationship with the army: the emperor gave gifts in the form of donatives and decorations, and was also responsible for the soldiers' regular pay and discharge bonuses; he was the font of *disciplina*, their ultimate commander; and he was a father figure to the soldiers, their guide and caregiver and corrector.

In terms of compliance theory, the emperor's three guises line up quite well with the three compliance relationships: as benefactor, the emperor associated himself with remuneration; as *imperator*, he was the ultimate source of discipline and sanctioned the punishment of transgressions; as *commilito*, the emperor presented himself as sharing the values and interests of the soldiery – someone worthy of their obedience. This range of appeals ensured that whatever an individual legionary's disposition, he had good reason to be loyal to the emperor: ideally, he saw the emperor as an impressive commander and fellow-soldier; if not, he could recognise that the emperor was the source of his personal enrichment; if need be, he could fear the emperor's wrath.

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<sup>135</sup> Roller (2001), 129-287.

## Conclusion

We can say with confidence that the projected presence of the emperor loomed large in lives of legionaries, constantly made manifest through images and symbols and invocations; we can say that the emperor was theorised as the benefactor of the armies, their commander and source of *disciplina*; we can say that legionaries cared about issues of succession, and were concerned with the emperor's qualities beyond his ability to pay them. How far can we say that the legionaries themselves felt any commitment or dedication to the emperor?

There are many inscriptions set up by soldiers, dedicated to the emperor and his health. One could infer genuine sentiment behind these, as Speidel has recently done:

‘[the soldiers] understood that they were the emperor's agents, while the emperor was the person responsible for the army. It was their common task to guarantee the Empire's peace and security under the protection of Jupiter. As a result, many soldiers and military units regularly made vows “for the safety of” (*pro salute* or *pro incolumitate*) the Roman emperor (for example, *CIL VIII 2638 = ILS 9293*, Lambaesis).’<sup>136</sup>

Such conclusions are impossible to test. Although these common salutations were not strictly necessary, and do reflect a conscious choice on the part of the dedicator, the reasons for including them might have more to do with self-advancement than loyal sentiment.

Naturally enough, impressing the emperor – on the rare occasions when this was possible – was a source of pride for soldiers. A famous verse inscription records how a soldier in Pannonia swam the Danube in full kit in front of the emperor Hadrian, and shot

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<sup>136</sup> Speidel (2014), 332.

an arrow out of the air with another arrow.<sup>137</sup> Josephus describes a horseman named Pedianus snatching a fleeing enemy by the ankle and dragging him ‘like some precious treasure’ to Titus.<sup>138</sup> After the Romans’ victory in the war, Titus personally presented the bravest soldiers with golden crowns, neck-chains, miniature spears, silver standards, and promotions.<sup>139</sup> One Priscus of Paphlagonian Hadrianopolis boasted that Trajan, having witnessed his bravery, promoted him to the rank of *signifer* or *imaginifer*.<sup>140</sup> As mentioned above, even when the emperor was not present, soldiers conceived of their benefits as flowing from the emperor, commonly naming him as the one who awarded their *dona*.<sup>141</sup>

Commodus provides an interesting example of an emperor who was apparently well-liked by the soldiers: as part of his bid for the Praetorians’ loyalty, Didius Julianus promised ‘to reinstate the memory of Commodus by restoring the honours and statues which the senate had removed’;<sup>142</sup> Septimius Severus deified Commodus and immediately announced this to the soldiers.<sup>143</sup> Altars and statues attesting the worship of the cult of Commodus are found in forts across the empire, in Asia, Europe and Africa.<sup>144</sup> Despite being painted as a ridiculous figure by our senatorial sources, Commodus was apparently appealing to the soldiers. Caligula may be a comparable example – despite being despised by the senatorial classes, there is evidence that he had some popular appeal, which may well have extended to the soldiery: he adopted the titles *castrorum filius* and *pater exercituum*,<sup>145</sup> presented himself as an energetic commander and took personal command

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<sup>137</sup> *CIL* III, 3676; Dio 69.9.

<sup>138</sup> Jos. *BJ*. 6.161-3 (ὡσπερ τι κειμήλιον).

<sup>139</sup> Jos. *BJ*. 7.13-15.

<sup>140</sup> *SEG*. 1993.911.

<sup>141</sup> Maxfield (1984), 117.

<sup>142</sup> Herod. 2.6.10 (ὁ δ’ ἀνελθὼν τὴν τε Κομόδου μνήμην αὐτοῖς καὶ τὰς τιμὰς καὶ τὰς εἰκόνας, ἃς ἡ σύγκλητος καθεῖλεν, ἀνανεώσασθαι ὑπέσχετο).

<sup>143</sup> *SHA Sev.* 11.3-4.

<sup>144</sup> Speidel (1993), 113-4.

<sup>145</sup> Suet. *Cal.* 22.1.

of an army, and minted the first known coin depicting an emperor addressing the army.<sup>146</sup> Herodian claims that the soldiers disapproved of Macrinus, Caracalla's successor, for having a luxurious lifestyle in contrast to his predecessor's efforts to share the toils of the men.<sup>147</sup>

The emperor did not simply project his image into the lives of the soldiers: the soldiers themselves engaged in constructing a virtual relationship with the emperor. Whether conceiving of their service as being *ad latus Augusti* or thanking the emperor for awards with which he had no personal involvement, the soldiers conceived of the emperor as a physically distant, but nonetheless immediate figure. It does not follow from this that soldiers were simple-minded or gullible; rather, the extent to which they participated in the construction of the emperor's image and treated him as a figure with whom they could 'interact' emphasises that this relationship was a genuinely important one.

#### Collectivity Attachments: Initial Conclusion

Having considered three different levels of attachment for the legionary, we ought to try to assess their relative importance. On the basis of the literary evidence alone, we would have little reason to think of Roman legionaries as a 'band of brothers', tightly bonded in small groups; the legion, on other hand, appears supremely important, while the emperors' attempts to negotiate their relationships with the soldiery are fraught.<sup>148</sup> Other evidence, as we have seen, brings to light the vital importance of the *centuriae* in the lives of legionaries. A great deal of everyday activity was organised around the smallest

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<sup>146</sup> Campbell (1984), 35 ('The accumulation of evidence shows an emperor who ostentatiously emphasized his connection with the army').

<sup>147</sup> Herod. 5.2.5.

<sup>148</sup> Ash (1999) argues that Tacitus presents all of the emperors involved in the *Histories*, even Vespasian, as misguided characters who do not fully appreciate the dynamics of their armies.

subdivisions of the army, and we have solid evidence that legionaries cared for their *centuriae* and based their identities partly around these groups.

Unlike primary group attachment, unit-level attachment is something historically rarer and stranger. Units require deliberate construction and loyalty to the unit requires stimulation over time. Unit-level attachment is absent from many military forces throughout history; in Crowley's assessment of the Athenian hoplite, for instance, he concludes that 'when the Athenian hoplite met his enemy in furious close-quarters combat, he did so without the benefit of military unit cohesion'.<sup>149</sup> That the legion comes across so clearly from our sources as a meaningful and important unit is very telling. What were once temporarily levies known by numbers developed into standing units with distinct identities, the maintenance of which was important to common soldiers and their leaders alike. The strength of unit-level attachment deserves to be recognised as a distinctive feature of the Roman army.

It is worth remembering that Roman soldiers, recruited young into an institution which would be their home for a couple of decades, existed in a very different context to the conscript soldiers central to much twentieth century military sociology. Separated from the villages, towns, and tribes which would otherwise have constituted an important component of their identity, Roman legionaries required new communities with which to identify. In this context, the importance of the legion makes even greater sense.

Although the close association of the emperor with military life comes across very clearly in the literary evidence, as well as in imperial iconography, there is little evidence to suggest that the emperor loomed as large in the daily lives of the men as their *centuriae* and legions. The standardisation of imperial representation to the army may have acted to make the emperor a somewhat unnoteworthy figure – only when things went wrong, such

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<sup>149</sup> Crowley (2012), 79.

as during complications around the payment of a donative, did this figure come into focus. Compared to other armies which combat motivation studies have found to be strongly bonded around a shared ideology or commitment to an authority figure, as in Bartov's study of the Wehrmacht during World War II, we can say that the Roman army was most certainly not a military force in which constant ideological indoctrination played an important role.<sup>150</sup> Nonetheless, in an empire as vast and diverse as that of the Romans, the emperor provided an important unifying figure for the military as an institution, sealed with an oath which none took lightly.

Although I have placed the most emphasis on unit-level attachment, I still affirm that there is good evidence for all three levels of attachment. This makes sense: given the vast scale of the army and the number of roles that it fulfilled, its organisational subdivisions were crucially important, and a legionary's membership of his *centuria* and legion would be constantly reified. The emperor at the top of the structure, meanwhile, was perpetually concerned with the loyalty of the soldiers.

This discussion, however, can only go so far if we focus directly on the evidence for attachment at these different levels. To preview the findings of this thesis's later chapters, which examine the social context of legionary life more broadly, we shall see that the case for primary group importance will be greatly complicated. In chapters 6-7 of this thesis, I explore the ways in which Roman soldiers had opportunities for socialisation outside of their *centuriae* with an extensive community of non-military personnel, as well as the fact that military units at all levels were regularly fragmented. Chapter 8 also discusses some fascinating evidence for attachment to legions by soldiers physically distant from the unit's main base or the bulk of its members, and argues that in the face of the disruption imposed by the extensive practice of detachment, the legion provided a

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<sup>150</sup> Bartov (1992).

lasting source of belonging and identity. For now, however, we proceed to examine the Roman army in terms of the compliance relationships. These discussions, too, will contribute to our understanding of attachment at various levels.

## Chapter 4: Remuneration

Having considered the soldier's different affiliations in the three previous chapters, we now consider the ways in which he was motivated. As discussed previously, compliance theory is a useful framework with which to consider this, and encourages us to think both about the ways that organisations exert power over their members, and the different ways that members relate or orientate themselves to organisations. The first possible compliance relationship, the remunerative/calculative relationship, is one in which (in its most extreme form) individuals calculate that they stand to gain from obeying the demands of the organisation – this may mean immediate financial gain, but can also encompass such benefits as social advancement and improved future prospects. In this relationship, the individual need not have any emotional attachment to the institution, or agree morally with its objectives.

Furthermore, we ought to distinguish between general pay/conditions of service, and conditional rewards for specific acts. If legionaries were generally well remunerated, this would have encouraged satisfaction with their service and a positive affiliation with the army; to encourage exceptional acts of bravery or commitment, however, would require specific rewards (although it should be stressed that the relationship between remuneration and motivation is not straightforward: experiments on the effects of cognitive dissonance have often found that individuals insufficiently remunerated for a task have more positive feelings about the task compared with individuals who are sufficiently rewarded – if an individual cannot justify their compliance to themselves in terms of monetary gain, they have to rationalise their cooperation in other terms, such as enjoyment or moral attachment).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Classically, Festinger and Carlsmith (1959).

Immediately upon joining the army, a soldier would receive his *viaticum*, a sum of 75 denarii which, the name implies, would seem to represent a reimbursement of travel expenses.<sup>2</sup> This could be given upon arrival at the army rather than provided to spend *en route*: in a letter written by one Apion, a recruit to the fleet, he mentions receiving his *viaticum* (*βιάτικον*), amounting to three gold pieces (three *aurei* = 75 denarii) only when he arrived at the fleet at Misenum.<sup>3</sup> In *RMR* 70, an auxiliary pay account, all of the soldiers have the sum of 75 denarii *in viatico* – seemingly, they too did not spend any of their *viatica*. However, it has been suggested that in *RMR* 74, in which the *signiferi* of six centuries report the deposits of various amounts for new recruits to their centuries, these deposits are unspent *viatica* (the average deposit per recruit would be 21 denarii for the first century, 13.6 for the second, 27 for the third, 10 for the fourth, 13 for the fifth, and 8 for the sixth).<sup>4</sup> Perhaps poorer recruits or men recruited *en masse* had to be given their *viatica* to spend immediately, while others had enough cash to hand that reimbursement was acceptable (Apion, after all, was literate, and therefore presumably had greater means than many other recruits). It should be noted that there is no evidence for legionary *viatica*, but it seems probable that they too received the travel expenses given to auxiliaries and soldiers of the fleet.

There seems no reason why a soldier would not be able to withdraw from his deposited *viaticum* during service, and Fink suggests that in *RMR* 73, a second-century record of sums held by a cavalry *turma*, the genitive *uiaticorum* may indicate such a withdrawal.<sup>5</sup> It is true that none of the soldiers in *RMR* 70 (the only pay record which records the amounts of deposited *viatica*) had withdrawn any of their 75 denarii; but as we shall discuss below, none of the soldiers in this curious document withdrew from their non-

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<sup>2</sup> Watson (1969), 44; Phang (2008), 168.

<sup>3</sup> *BGU* II, 423, lines 8-10.

<sup>4</sup> Johnson (1936), 677; Fink (1971) 277.

<sup>5</sup> Fink (1971), 269; *RMR* 70, fr. A, col. I, line 14.

*viatica* deposits either. Legionaries received their pay in three instalments, on the first of January, May, and September.<sup>6</sup> Alston conjectures that the system of paying *stipendia* on three specified dates in a year was introduced by Julius Caesar<sup>7</sup> (given other Caesarian innovations related to pay and coinage, this is plausible, though Brunt suggests the thrice-annual payment system may have been instituted earlier, perhaps by Marius).<sup>8</sup>

The issue of pay scales in the Roman army is notoriously thorny, particularly regarding the ratio between legionary and auxiliary pay.<sup>9</sup> Fortunately for our purposes, rates of pay for legionaries are relatively uncontroversial:<sup>10</sup>

| <b>Date/Emperor</b>               | <b>Stipendium<br/>(sestertii)</b> | <b>Annual Pay<br/>(sestertii)</b> | <b>%-increase</b> |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Caesar/Augustus</b>            | 300                               | 900                               | 100               |
| <b>Domitian (AD 84)</b>           | 400                               | 1,200                             | 33.3              |
| <b>Septimius Severus (AD 197)</b> | 800                               | 2,400                             | 100               |
| <b>Caracalla (AD 212)</b>         | 1,200                             | 3,600                             | 50                |
| <b>Maximinus Thrax (AD 235)</b>   | 2,400                             | 7,200                             | 100               |

However, legionaries were not simply paid this full sum: certain standard costs were immediately deducted from their pay. Although the only real evidence for the specifics of the deductions system comes, as we shall see, from first century Egypt and Syria, deductions clearly existed in the Republic: Polybius explains that for food, clothing, and

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<sup>6</sup> Speidel (1992a), 87.

<sup>7</sup> Alston (1995), 103.

<sup>8</sup> Brunt (1950), 51-2.

<sup>9</sup> Speidel (1992a) remains the most widely-accepted model based on all available evidence; Alston (1994) objects that 'we have little evidence for legionary pay rates in the third century and, since most of the documents provide us with figures which are unknown proportions of the annual pay of the soldiers concerned, the evidence for auxiliary pay is not sufficient to allow the calculation of exact pay rates for any period.' Speidel (2014) responds to critics of his model.

<sup>10</sup> Taken from Speidel (1992a), 88.

additional arms, the quaestor would make deductions from pay at a fixed price (ὁ ταμίης τὴν τεταγμένην τιμὴν ἐκ τῶν ὀψωνίων ὑπολογίζεται).<sup>11</sup> In Tacitus' description of the Pannonian mutiny in AD 14, Percennius includes deductions for clothing, arms, and tents among his complaints about the conditions of service.<sup>12</sup>

Understanding the deductions system is important for our objective of judging how well remunerated the Roman legionary was, since this determined how much of his pay he could actually spend or save. Three documents exist which give some indication of deductions in the late first century AD.

**Fink, *RMR* 68 (Egypt, AD 81)**<sup>13</sup>

L(ucio) Aşinio co(n)s(ule)  
 Q(uintus) Iulius Proculus Dam(asco)  
 [accepit] stip(endium) i an(ni) iii do{mini} dr(achmas) ccxlvii s(emis)  
 ex eis  
 faenaria dr(achmas) x  
 in victum dr(achmas) lxxx  
 caligas fascias dr(achmas) xii  
 sarturñaliciu(k) m(a)str(ense) dr(achmas) xx  
 . . . . r . . torium dr(achmas) lx  
 ex[p]ensas dr(achmas) clxxxii  
 reliquas deposuit dr(achmas) lxx s(emis)  
 et habuit ex prio(re) d[r](achmas) cxxxvi  
 fit summ(a) dr(achmae) cci s(emis)  
 accepit stip(endium) ii anni eiusd(em) dr(achmas) ccxlvii s(emis)  
 ex eis  
 faenaria dr(achmas) x  
 in victum dr(achmas) lxxx  
 caligas fascias dr(achmas) xii  
 ad signa dr(achmas) iv  
 expensas dr(achmas) cvi  
 reliquas deposuit dr(achmas) cxli s(emis)  
 et habuit ex pror[ -ca.- ] dr(achmas) cci s(emis)  
 fit [su]mma omnis dr(achmae) cccxli[ii]  
 accepit sti]p(endium) iii a[nn(i) ei]u]s [dr(achmas)] ccxlv[i] s(emis)  
 [e]x [i]s  
 faenaria [dr(achmas) x]  
 [in victu]m dr(achmas) [lx]xx

<sup>11</sup> Polyb. 6.39.15.

<sup>12</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 1.17.

<sup>13</sup> This text taken from <https://papyri.info/ddbdp/rom.mil.rec;1;9>, accessed 07/03/2020.

[calig]aş [f]aşcias dr(achmas) [xii]  
 in vestim[e]nt[i]s dr(achmas) c[xl]v s(emis)  
 expensaş dr(achmas) c[cx]lvii s(emis)  
 habet in deposito dr(achmas) cccxl̄iiii  
 Rennius Innocens

Valerius Germanus Tyro  
 accepit stip(endium) i an(ni) iii do(mini) dr(achmas) ccxlvii s(emis)  
 ex eis  
 faenaria dr(achmas) x  
 in v[ic]tum dr(achmas) lxxx  
 caligas fascias dr(achmas) xii  
 saturnaliçiu[m] k(astrense(?)) dr(achmas) xx  
 in vestimen[t]i[s] dr(achmas) c  
 expensaş dr(achmas) ccxxii  
 reliquas depo(sitas) dr(achmas) xxv s(emis)  
 et habuit dr(achmas) xx[i]  
 fit summa omni[s] dr(achmae) xlvi s(emis)  
 accepit stip(endium) ii anni eius dr(achmas) ccxlvii s(emis)  
 ex eis  
 faenaria [d]r(achmas) x  
 in victum dr(achmas) lxxx  
 caligas fascias dr(achmas) xii  
 ad signa dr(achmas) iv  
 expensas dr(achmas) cvi  
 re[li]quas deposuit dr(achmas) cxli s(emis)  
 et habuit ex p[ri]ore dr(achmas) xlvi s(emis)  
 f[it] summa omn<i>s dr(achmae) [c]lxxxvi[is]  
 accepit stip(endium) iii ann[i] e[i]u[s] dr(achmas) ccxlvii s(emis)  
 ex eis  
 fae[n]aria dr(achmas) x  
 in victum dr(achmas) lxxx  
 cal[i]gas fascias dr(achmas) xii  
 in vestimentis dr(achmas) cxlv s(emis)  
 habet [i]n deposito dr(achmas) clxxxviii

This document concerns two soldiers, Proculus and Germanus, each receiving 247.5 drachmae (one drachma being equivalent to one sestertius). There are considerable difficulties in interpreting this data, not least because it concerns only two soldiers among thousands,<sup>14</sup> and it is unclear whether the men were auxiliaries rather than legionaries, since they receive 5/6<sup>th</sup> of the expected legionary pay.<sup>15</sup> The two soldiers each receive

<sup>14</sup> Fink (1971), 243-9.

<sup>15</sup> Auxiliaries: Speidel (1973); Speidel (1992a), 89; legionaries: Watson (1969), 91, Cotton and Geiger (1989), 39ff; Roth (1999), 15.

247.5 drachmae, of which 2.5 can be explained as the same 1% accounting charge present in RMR 69.<sup>16</sup> As for the other 50, the auxiliary explanation is not entirely satisfying: although it is true that the *triae nominae* of the men count for little in determining their status, since individuals with *triae nominae* certainly did serve as auxiliaries,<sup>17</sup> the fact that the verso of the papyrus contains a duty roster of *legio III Cyrenaica* (RMR 9, 58) and other documents concerning men exclusively with *triae nominae*, probably legionaries (RMR 10, 37) seems to point strongly towards the pay record also being that of a legionary unit. Given how little we know of the technicalities of pay, it is certainly possible to suggest that these legionaries received the remainder of their 300 drachmae as cash to spend, not deposited in their accounts and therefore not noted in these records.<sup>18</sup> The cautious summary of Fink seems most appropriate: ‘Perhaps the most that can be said of them with assurance is that they are pay-records of legionaries. The evidence now available does not seem to warrant any more detailed interpretation.’<sup>19</sup>

If these men were indeed supposed to be paid 900 drachmae over the year, and we treat the 50 drachmae as money retained, then Proculus would retain 39% of his first payment, 64% of his second payment, and 17% of his third payment, keeping 40% of his money for the year. Germanus would retain 25% of his first payment, 64% of his second payment, and 0% of his final payment, keeping 35% of his money for the year.<sup>20</sup> If they received only 750 drachmae as their yearly pay, Proculus would retain 26% of his first payment, 57% of his second payment, and 0% of his third payment, keeping 28% of his annual pay. Germanus would retain 10% of his first payment, 57% of his second payment, and 0% of his third payment, keeping 22% of his pay for the year.

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<sup>16</sup> Speidel (1973), 144; Alston (1994), 116-7.

<sup>17</sup> RMR 87.

<sup>18</sup> Watson (1969), 106-7; Alston (1994), 117.

<sup>19</sup> Fink (1971), 245.

<sup>20</sup> I have assumed no 1% charge applied to the 50 drachmae in these calculations.

Putting aside the complications mentioned above, the document still makes two interesting points: firstly, a soldier might never see the greater portion of his pay, it being immediately taken to cover expenses. Furthermore, individual soldiers could be charged different amounts – Germanus, for whatever reason, had two deductions for clothing throughout the year, and began the year with only 21 drachmae in his account compared to Proculus' 136 drachmae – perhaps he was a more profligate individual, or had served for a shorter period.

We can compare *RMR 69* (*P.Gen.Lat.* 4), heavily restored with reference to *RMR 68*, but still dreadfully mutilated and unclear, not least due to clerical errors and attempted corrections.<sup>21</sup>

**Fink, *RMR 69* (Egypt, AD 83-4)<sup>22</sup>**

[ -ca.?- ] [ Qu]adratu[s . . . . ]  
 [lvii]  
 [ -ca.?- ]. umiā (centur ) dr(achmas) [[ [lx]xxx . . «  
 [accepit stip(endium) i an(ni) -ca.?- ] dr(achmas) ccxcvii  
 [ex eis -ca.?- ]  
 [faenaria -ca.?- ] dr(achmas) xiii  
 [in victum (?)] dr(achmas) cxxiix  
 [caligas fascias d]r(achmas) xvi  
 [ -ca.?- ] lvii a(sses) ii s(emis)  
 [in vestimentis (?)] dr(achmas) [[lxxxxiii a(sses) ii s(emis)]  
 [ -ca.?- ] [ es]t s(umma) s(upra) s(criptarum) ccxix a(sses) ii s(emis)  
 [ -ca.?- ] ii  
 [ -ca.?- ] [d]ēp(ositas) dr(achmas) lxxx[[xvi] a(sses) iii s(emis)  
 [ -ca.?- ]. . um dr(achmas) lxxxii a[ -ca.?- ]  
 [ -ca.?- ]  
 [accepit stip(endium) ii an(ni) -ca.?- ] dr(achmas) ccxcv[ii]  
 [ex eis -ca.?- ]  
 [faenaria ] dr(achmas) xiii  
 [in victum ] dr(achmas) c  
 [caligas fascia]s dr(achmas) xvi  
 [ -ca.?- ]! dr(achmas) xx  
 [ -ca.?- ]. cx  
 [ -ca.?- ] est s(umma) s(upra) s(criptarum) dr(achmae) cx![[viii]  
 [ -ca.?- ]

<sup>21</sup> *RMR 69*, which follows the reconstruction of Marichal (1957).

<sup>22</sup> This text taken from <https://papyri.info/ddbdp/rom.mil.rec;1;69>, accessed 07/03/2020.

[-ca.?- ] dr(achmas) xxxv[-ca.?- ]  
 [accepit stip(endium) iii an(ni) -ca.?- ] i . dr(achmas) cc[xcvii -ca.?- ]  
 [ex ei]s  
 [-ca.?- ] []. dr(achmas) x[ii]ii a(sses) [iii -ca.?- ]  
 [in victum] dr(achmas) c  
 [caligas fascia]s dr(achmas) xvi  
 [-ca.?- ] [ dr(achmas) xx]xiii a(sses) ii  
 [summa s(upra) s(criptarum) -ca.?- ] [d]r(achmae) clxiii a(sses) v  
 [-ca.?- ] xlvi a(sses) ii[i] s(emis)  
 [-ca.?- ] cxx a(sses) ii s(emis)  
 [-ca.?- ] cxc[v]ii  
 [-ca.?- ]. [-ca.?- ]

This document records deductions of the same kinds (*faenaria; in uictum; caligas fascias; in uestimentis*), though the amounts of the deductions are higher – 13 rather than 10 drachmae for hay, for example. Furthermore, the soldier receives *stipendia* of 300 drachmae (minus the 1% charge), which is the full amount for a legionary; we can only conclude that if the two legionaries in *RMR* 68 did receive 50 drachmae per *stipendium* as spending cash, this was not the case with the subject of *RMR* 69 and therefore not an entirely regular practice.

Accepting the readings of Bruckner and Marichal,<sup>23</sup> the deductions for the first pay period total 217 drachmae and 2 ½ obols (including the 3 drachmae automatically deducted), leaving Quadratus with 28% of the 297 drachmae paid; for the second pay period, 262 drachmae are deducted, leaving Quadratus with 13% of his pay; for the third pay period, 166 drachmae and five obols are deducted, leaving 54% of pay; information on the fourth pay period does not survive.

The third text relating to deductions is *P. Yadin 722*.

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<sup>23</sup> Bruckner and Marichal (1954), 24-5.

**P. Yadin 722 (Masada, AD 72-75)<sup>24</sup>**

[r]atio st[ip]end[i]a  
 c(aius)(\*) Messius c(aii)(\*) f(ilius) Fab(ia) Beru(tensis)  
 [accepi st]ipendi (denarios) L  
 ex eos(\*) · s[olvi]  
 hordiaria(\*) [(denarios) XVI]  
 (hand 2) [ -ca.?- ]r̄nius  
 sumtuarium(\*) (denarios) XX  
 c[a]ligas (denarios) V  
 lorum · fasciari(um) (denarios) II  
 tunica · linia(\*) (denarios) VII  
 accepi stipendi (denarios) LX[ -ca.?- ]  
 ex eos(\*) solvi  
 hordiaria(\*) (denarios) XV[I]  
 sumtuarium(\*) (denarios) [XX]  
 c(aius)(\*) Antonius  
 pallium opertoriu(m) [(denarios) -ca.?- ]  
 Puplius Valerius  
 tun[i]ca · alba [(denarios) -ca.?- ]<sup>25</sup>

Although this document resembles the format of *RMR* 68, it also differs significantly, and ought to be seen as a different type of document: it is written in the first rather than the third person (although its calligraphic quality and careful layout suggest that it was nevertheless written by an accounting official);<sup>26</sup> its terminology differs for almost every type of deduction (and whereas in the Geneva papyri, there is a single entry titled *in uestimentis*, this papyrus contains specific entries titled *lorum fasciari(um)*, *tunica linia*, *pallium opertoriu(m)*, and *tun[i]ca alba*); the amounts listed after *accepi stipendi* differ, unlike *RMR* 68, 69, and 70; most importantly, it does not record how much of each payment was deposited (and so perhaps the *stipendium* amounts recorded are simply the totals spent on camp expenses, rather than overall pay), nor does it state any information

<sup>24</sup> Text taken from <https://papyri.info/ddbdp/p.masada.;722>, accessed 07/03/2020.

<sup>25</sup> The reconstructed *hordiaria* amounts are perhaps based on circular reasoning: the *hordiaria* amount is missing from the first pay period, and the reconstructed figure of 16 denarii is based only on making the total expenses up to the 50 denarii recorded after *accepi stipendi*, it is possible that not all of the 50 denarii were spent – after all, the charge is far greater than the 2.5 denarii *faenaria* charges in *RMR* 68. However, since the second *hordiaria* charge was at least 10 denarii (an initial *X* survives), the figure of 16 denarii and the overall reconstruction seem plausible.

<sup>26</sup> As suggested by Cotton and Geiger (1989), 37.

pertaining to the ‘account balance’. This document, therefore, seems related solely to expenses incurred – possibly, as Cotton and Geiger suggest, a ‘receipt’ of sorts, maybe a regular annual feature of military accounting, or available on request.<sup>27</sup>

One notable element in this papyrus is that the *sumptuarium* charge (20 denarii = 80 drachmae) is precisely equal to that in *RMR* 68, perhaps pointing to a standard amount at this time. The regular food charge in *RMR* 69 is 100 drachmae, maybe a result of increased rates after Domitian’s pay rise.<sup>28</sup> However, the *hordiararia* charge in *P. Yadin* 722 is notably higher than the *faenaria* charge in *RMR* 68, and possibly points to Messius being an *eques legionis* required to pay upkeep for a mount.<sup>29</sup> If this is the case, and Messius earned the annual 1,050 sestertii (262.5 denarii) which Speidel proposes for an *eques legionis* at this time,<sup>30</sup> he would have been left with 37.5 denarii from his first 87.5 denarii *stipendium* (43%), and 27.5 denarii from his second *stipendium* (31%); if he was an infantryman, those percentages would be 33% and 20%.

Let us draw some conclusions from the limited and problematic evidence of the three documents discussed above. First, a soldier could expect to lose the majority of his pay to deductions: of the pay periods covered, Proculus and Germanus (*RMR* 68) retained 40% and 35% of their pay (assuming an annual 900 drachmae in total); Quadratus (*RMR* 69) retained 28% of his pay; Messius (*P. Yadin* 722) retained 37% of his pay (assuming *eques legionis* pay at 262.5 denarii). The rhetorical complaint of Percennius that the soldiers’ pay was eaten away by deductions therefore had some justification.<sup>31</sup> Charges for arms would also have been costly stoppages. These are not mentioned in any of the papyri, presumably because arms would have to be replaced more rarely; but they are mentioned

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>28</sup> Alston (1994), 117.

<sup>29</sup> Cotton and Geiger (1989), 52-3.

<sup>30</sup> Speidel (1992a), 92-3.

<sup>31</sup> *Tac. Ann.* 1.17.

in the complaints of Percennius, and a 103 denarii charge for arms is mentioned in a late second century document relating to auxiliary deposits.<sup>32</sup> It is also probable that equipment repairs were charged, if the entry *refec arm* on one highly fragmentary record stands for *refectio armorum*.<sup>33</sup>

It does seem that soldiers in all provinces received the same pay, and it is typically asserted that they were charged equal deductions regardless of local price levels.<sup>34</sup> If this is the case, it remains unclear whether legionaries benefited from being protected from price fluctuations, or were forced to pay more for goods that they might be able to acquire more cheaply.<sup>35</sup> In Tacitus' account of the Pannonian mutiny, the soldiers do complain about deductions, but this is to emphasise how meagre their pay is rather than to claim that the rates for deductions were extortionate.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, it is entirely possible that deductions actually fluctuated with market prices: when describing Nero's gift of free *frumentum* to the praetorians, Tacitus says that previously they had paid the market price (*ex modo annonae*) – possibly meaning that this was the standard way to determine deduction rates.<sup>37</sup> The *African War* describes a situation where the soldiers' savings had been ruined by the high price of corn, meaning that either corn was, on this occasion, not provided through the deductions system for some reason, or deductions had increased to correspond to the market price.<sup>38</sup> Thus the slightly higher charges in *RMR* 69 compared to 68 might be explained as the result of price fluctuations, rather than an opportunistic increase to the charge after Domitian's pay rise, as Alston suggests.<sup>39</sup> We are unable to say on the basis of our evidence whether deductions were standardised across the empire: the fact that we

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<sup>32</sup> *P. Fay.* 105; Watson (1969), 104.

<sup>33</sup> *RMR* 71, frag. A, lines 3, 12.

<sup>34</sup> E.g. Rathbone (2009), 310.

<sup>35</sup> Herz (2007), 311 suggests that the state in fact made a profit.

<sup>36</sup> *Tac. Ann.* 1.17.

<sup>37</sup> *Tac. Ann.* 15.72.

<sup>38</sup> *B.Afr.* 47.

<sup>39</sup> Alston (1994), 117.

possess only three papyri which show figures for deductions across 3 years, two from Egypt and one from Syria, should make us cautious about drawing empire-wide conclusions from any correspondences between the documents; and in any case, the deduction amounts differ between them.

Proculus and Germanus started the year with relatively small deposits of 136 drachmae and 21 drachmae, and ended the year having significantly increased their deposits to 343 drachmae and 188 drachmae. There are three possible explanations: perhaps they were relatively new to the army, and therefore had saved little money;<sup>40</sup> perhaps deductions in previous years had been closer to or in excess of 100% of the *stipendia*, leaving these soldiers with relatively low deposited amounts; or there was some system for withdrawing spending cash, which neither Proculus nor Germanus availed themselves of in the period covered by *RMR* 68, but which had previously caused them to spend rather than save most of their earnings. The notion that a soldier could save his wages and end up retiring with a healthy sum<sup>41</sup> holds only if the low account totals are the result of Proculus and Germanus being new recruits; if either of my other suggestions is correct, they would have very little money saved by the time of their discharge. In the collection of late second century pay accounts in *RMR* 70, the auxiliaries also have low amounts *in deposito*: most, probably new recruits, have 100 denarii *in deposito* and 75 *in viatico*,<sup>42</sup> but the soldiers with irregular amounts also have relatively little: sums of 195 denarii and 8.5 obols, 206 denarii, and 187.5 denarii.<sup>43</sup> Fink asks whether the genitive *depositi*, followed by the figure of 98 denarii, in one fragmentary pay record implies something like *tulit depositi* – ‘he withdrew part of his deposit’.<sup>44</sup> If most legionary

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<sup>40</sup> The suggestion of Herz (2007), 313.

<sup>41</sup> E.g. Patterson (1993), 97: ‘Even a comparatively low-ranking soldier could, by astute saving of his annual wages, put by a substantial sum which he could add to his retirement donative and then invest in land’.

<sup>42</sup> Frag. A, col. I, lines 10, 16, 23, 31; frag. A, col. II, lines 6, 13, 28, 36; frag. B, col. I, lines 5, 12, 19, 25.

<sup>43</sup> Frag. A, col. II, lines 22, 42; frag. E, line 6.

<sup>44</sup> Fink (1971), 267.

accounts contained a few hundred denarii at most like the ones studied above, because they were regularly drawn from, the figure of 98 denarii would fit sensibly.

Why should there be deductions at all? In the case of rations, convenience is surely the answer, and the army would have benefited from buying in bulk (though as noted above, it is unclear whether these savings were passed on to the legionaries, or if the army made a profit through the deductions system). As for items such as clothing, which were supplied as needed, making soldiers pay for their own items would encourage them to take care of them, and also prevent the possibility of soldiers flogging free military issues. Additionally, the deductions system would reduce the amount of physical money which had to be held and distributed in the field, which would be more convenient, more secure, and reduce the potential war chest of any seditious general (cf. the revolt of Saturninus, using the combined monies of legions *XXI Rapax* and *XIV Gemina*, and Domitian's subsequent ban on any individual depositing more than 1,000 sesterces *ad signa*).<sup>45</sup>

Tchernia summarises the situation in the first century: 'we can readily agree with D. J. Breeze and Lothar Wierschowski that a clear distinction must be made between the supplies that the army itself was responsible for delivering to the troops and anything extra that the soldiers could get for themselves, either from traders or in the taverns of the *canabae* and *vici*, which periodically were also supplied by these same traders.'<sup>46</sup> However, Speidel argues that deductions were gradually reduced in the second century, turning private purchase into the main method of acquisition for all the items which were previously supplied and charged for in the deductions system.<sup>47</sup> This is based mainly on *RMR 70*, an auxiliary pay record of AD 192, in which the only standardised deduction is a small contribution (*collatio*) of 4 denarii, 22 ½ obols. Furthermore, in *ChLA 495* (AD 193–

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<sup>45</sup> Suet. *Dom.* 7.3.

<sup>46</sup> Tchernia (2016), 99.

<sup>47</sup> Speidel (1992a), 97-8.

211), a charge of 4 denarii and 4 obols is made (listed as *contulit publico*); in *ChLA* 446, 8 denarii and 4 obols are charged as *sublatio*; in *ChLA* 473, a *sublatio* charge is made but the amount is lost.

It should be noted that *RMR* 70 is not entirely easy to interpret, and it differs from the fairly intuitive system in *RMR* 68 and 69. Some soldiers receive their pay, subtract the contribution, and take the rest (i.e. the *stipendium* minus the contribution), e.g.:

LUCCIUS AGILLIUS CASTR

lorictitis in dep [denarios] c in uiatico [denarios] lxxv

accepit stipendi [denarios] lxxxiv ob xv s e

ex eo collatio [denarios] iiii ob xxii s

reliquos tulit [denarios] lxxix ob xxi e

habet in dep [denarios] c in uiatico [denarios] lxxv<sup>48</sup>

Others receive their pay, have their contribution and previous debts recorded, neither of which they apparently pay, since the sum of these amounts is recorded as their new debt, e.g.:

lorictitis in dep [denarios] c in uiatico [denarios] lxxv

debet ex priore ration [denarios] xviii ob xxiv s

item collatio íío stip [denarios] iiii ob xxii s

f quos debet [denarios] xxiii ob xix

habet in dep [denarios] c in uiatico [denarios] lxxv

debet [denarios] xxiii ob xix<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Col. ii, lines 1-6.

<sup>49</sup> Frag. a, Col. i, lines 27-32.

Such men presumably took their whole *stipendium* with the debts hanging over them until the next payday, with no need for a *tulit* entry to record this. In all cases, deposit and *viaticum* amounts remain the same after accounting, so these are not running accounts like *RMR* 68 and 69; if indeed deductions had been abolished, the soldier would simply be given his full *stipendium* (minus contribution) in coin on payday, with these amounts *in deposito* and *in viatico* apparently unrelated to the whole process. One presumes that whatever these funds were, they could be withdrawn, since it would make little sense to repeat the figures twice in every accounting if they were never to be touched. The documents, then, are different from the three pay accounts from the first century examined above, and one could suggest that the absence of deductions here does not mean that they were not recorded elsewhere; but this would be a cumbersome accounting system, especially as other kinds of deductions are listed in these documents.

Elites were simultaneously suspicious of the soldiery becoming enriched, and wary of the dangers of impoverished and desperate troops: Dio attributes to Augustus the advice to ‘Maintain the soldiers adequately, so that they may not on account of want desire anything which belongs to others’,<sup>50</sup> echoed centuries later by the motto of Severus Alexander: ‘A soldier is not to be feared if he is clothed and armed and shod, and has a full stomach and something in his money-belt.’<sup>51</sup> Pay for ordinary *militēs* was therefore set at moderate level.

In certain respects, the army pay system left the legionary better off than a civilian labourer – some things like accommodation and medical care were free, the regularity of legionary pay might be reassuringly attractive compared to the vagaries of life as an itinerant worker, and soldiers were exempt from civilian customs duties.<sup>52</sup> Of course, these

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<sup>50</sup> Dio. 53.10.6: *τούς τε στρατιώτας τρέφετε μὲν ἀρκούντως, ὥστε μηδενὸς τῶν ἀλλοτρίων δι’ ἀπορίαν ἐπιθυμῆσαι, συνέχετε δὲ καὶ σωφρονίζετε, ὥστε μηδὲν κακὸν διὰ θρασύτητα δρᾶσαι.*

<sup>51</sup> *SHA. Alex. 52.3: miles non timetur, si vestitus, armatus, calciatus et satur et habens aliquid in zonula.*

<sup>52</sup> Wesch-Klein (1998), 45-7.

were balanced against the risks of combat, subjection to discipline, and a fixed term of service, as well as a perennial aspect of the history of military logistics – corruption.<sup>53</sup>

One of the main ways that corruption drained the purses of ordinary legionaries was the need to effectively bribe the centurions for furlough. According to Tacitus, this was a major cause of dissension among the men until Otho promised to pay the annual sums from his own purse – a practice followed by subsequent *boni principes*<sup>54</sup> (and Vitellius).<sup>55</sup> It is unclear to what extent the corruption consisted in swindling soldiers for furlough properly deserved, or in allowing them to take unscheduled leave: many sources recommend that furlough be difficult to obtain (e.g. *D.* 49.16.12.1: *Paternus quoque scripsit debere eum, qui se meminerit armato praeesse, parcissime commeatum dare*).<sup>56</sup> We might interpret the early first century letter of Satornilos in this light: Satornolis claims that if the opportunity presents itself, he will travel to see his mother in Pselkis (*ἐὰν εὔρω εὐκαιρείαν ἐργασείαν διδώ[ν]αι ἔρχομαι μετ' ἐπιστολῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς*) – he fears, however, that since the prefect (*ἡγεμῶν*) is on the road, he may be intercepted and sent back to his station, and the expense will have been in vain (*κενήν δαπάνην ποιήσω*).<sup>57</sup> This expense was possibly a bribe to a centurion or other officer for unmerited leave – hence the possibility of the prefect ordering Satornilos back *πρὸς τὰς σημέας*. Alternatively, of course, the expense might simply be travel costs; all the same, the notion that a soldier might simply be turned around and sent back to the standards suggests a furlough system to which some measure of caprice was inherent.

On the other hand, soldiers could profit from extortion of local populations.

Numerous edicts forbidding soldiers from forcibly requisitioning transport, occupying

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<sup>53</sup> Roth (1999), 275-6.

<sup>54</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 1.46. On furlough, Speidel (1985).

<sup>55</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 1.58.

<sup>56</sup> Phang (2008), 297-9.

<sup>57</sup> *P.Mich.* 3.203, lines 5-12.

lodgings, and taking property suggest that this was a common enough occurrence.<sup>58</sup> An edict of Mamertinus, prefect of Egypt, claims that the army had acquired a reputation among the locals for *πλεονεξία καὶ ἀδικία* as a result of its unlawful seizures of boats, animals and men, and the attribution of responsibility only to *πολλοὺς τῶν στρατιωτῶν* indicates that these were incidents of soldierly misconduct for individual gain, as opposed to the use of soldiers by abusive provincial officials (examples of which are even more plentiful).<sup>59</sup> As Haynes puts it, ‘It is highly likely that extortion was so routine as to become an accepted part of a soldier’s income’ – not accepted by provincial administrators, given the efforts to stamp out such behaviour, but certainly a practice which seems to have become a common part of soldiering.<sup>60</sup>

### Donativa

As well as regular pay, a soldier could count on receiving some number of *donativa* during his service. In the previous chapter, I discussed the ideology of *donativa*; here, I simply explore how much extra money a legionary might expect to gain from them. The known *donativa* are tabulated below:<sup>61</sup>

| <b>Emperor and occasion</b>                              | <b>Date</b> | <b>Amount</b>   | <b>Source</b>                                   |
|--|-------------|---|---|
| Augustus<br>Entry of Gaius<br>Caesar into public<br>life | 8 BC        | Unknown   | Dio 55.6.4.                                     |
| Augustus<br>In his will                                  | AD 14       | Praetorians: 250<br>Urban cohorts: 125<br>Legionaries: 75 | Tac. <i>Ann.</i> 1.8.<br>Suet. <i>Aug.</i> 101. |
| Tiberius   | AD 14       | Praetorians: 250<br>Urban cohorts: 125                    | Suet. <i>Tib.</i> 48.                           |

<sup>58</sup> Campbell (1984), 248-53; Mitchell (1976), 111-2. See chapter 6 below.

<sup>59</sup> *Select Papyri* II, 221.

<sup>60</sup> Haynes (2013), 48; see also my chapter 6.

<sup>61</sup> Fiebiger (1905), 1542–1545. On *donativa* generally, Bastien (1988).

|   |          |  |   |
|---|----------|--|---|
| Succession – doubling what was bequeathed by Augustus             |          | Legionaries: 75  |   |
| Tiberius<br>Reward for not joining Sejanus                        | AD 31    | Praetorians: 1000 <sup>62</sup>                              | Suet. <i>Tib.</i> 48.                                       |
| Tiberius<br>In his will   | AD 37    | Praetorians: 250<br>Urban cohorts: 125<br>Legionaries: 75    | Dio 59.2.2.   |
| Gaius<br>Accession<br>(additional to that bequeathed by Tiberius) | AD 37    | Praetorians: 250   | Dio 59.2.2.   |
| Claudius<br>Accession   | AD 41    | Praetorians: 3,750<br>(Praetorians: 5,000)<br>Legionaries: ? | Suet. <i>Claud.</i> 10.<br>( <i>Jos. Ant. Iud.</i> 19.4.2.) |
| Claudius<br>Entry of Nero to public life                          | AD 51    | Unknown  | Tac. <i>Ann.</i> 12.41.<br>Suet. <i>Ner.</i> 7.             |
| Claudius<br>Each anniversary of accession                         | (Annual) | Praetorians: 25  | Dio 60.12.4.  |
| Nero<br>Accession   | AD 54    | Praetorians: 3750<br>Legionaries: ?                          | Tac. <i>Ann.</i> 12.69.<br>Dio 61.3.1.                      |
| Nero<br>Detection of Piso's conspiracy                            | AD 65    | Praetorians: 500   | Tac. <i>Ann.</i> 15.72.                                     |
| Galba (promised)<br>Allegiance in bid for the throne              | AD 69    | Praetorians: 7,500<br>Legionaries: 1,250                     | Plut. <i>Galba.</i> 2.2.                                    |
| Otho<br>Quell riotous soldiers                                    | AD 69    | Praetorians: 1,250   | Tac. <i>Hist.</i> 1.82.                                     |
| Vespasian<br>Accession  | AD 69    | Unknown <sup>63</sup>  | Tac. <i>Hist.</i> 2.82.                                     |
| Titus<br>Accession  | AD 79    | Unknown  | Dio 67.26.3.  |
| Domitian<br>Accession   | AD 81    | Unknown  | Dio 67.26.3.  |
| Nerva<br>Accession  | AD 96    | Unknown  | Presumed <sup>64</sup>                                      |
| Trajan<br>Accession   | AD 98    | Unknown  | Plin. <i>Pan.</i> 25.2.                                     |

<sup>62</sup> And *quaedam munera* to the Syrian legions who did not revere his effigies.

<sup>63</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 2.82: *ne Vespasianus quidem plus civili bello obtulit quam alii in pace*. This may mean that he offered no more than 3,750 to the praetorians and however much had been regularly given to the legionaries.

<sup>64</sup> Elkins (2017), 27.

|   |        |  |  |
|---|--------|--|--|
| Hadrian<br>Accession                                  | AD 117 | Unknown (Double)   | SHA <i>Hadr.</i> 5.7.  |
| Hadrian<br>Adoption of L.<br>Ceionius<br>Commodus     | AD 136 | Unknown  | SHA <i>Ael.</i> 3.3; SHA<br><i>Hadr.</i> 23.12.                  |
| Antoninus Pius<br>Accession                           | AD 138 | Unknown  | SHA <i>Anton. Pius.</i><br>8.1.                                  |
| Antoninus Pius<br>Marriage of<br>Faustina             | AD 146 | Unknown  | SHA <i>Anton. Pius.</i><br>10.2.                                 |
| Marcus Aurelius<br>Celebrate joint rule<br>with Verus | AD 161 | Praetorians: 5,000   | SHA <i>M. Ant. Phil.</i><br>7.9.                                 |
| Commodus<br>Accession                                 | AD 180 | Unknown  | Herod. 1.5.1.  |
| Pertinax<br>Accession                                 | AD 193 | Unknown  | SHA <i>Pert.</i> 7.5.  |
| Pertinax<br>Accession                                 | AD 193 | Praetorians: 3,000<br>promised; 1,500<br>given<br>Legionaries:<br>Promised<br>(None given)   | SHA <i>Pert.</i> 15.7.   |
| Didius Julianus<br>Accession                          | AD 193 | Praetorians: 6,250<br>(promised) <sup>65</sup><br>Legionaries: ?<br>Praetorians: 7,500<br>paid<br>Praetorians:<br>Partially or entirely<br>unfulfilled | Dio 74.11.<br><br>SHA <i>Did. Iul.</i> 3.2.<br>Herodian 2.7.1-2. |
| Severus<br>Accession                                  | AD 193 | Legionaries: 2,500<br>(Only 250 paid)  | SHA <i>Sev.</i> 7.6.   |

Although the *donativum* was mainly concerned with securing the loyalty of the praetorians, legionaries also received money.<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, a key problem is that details of non-praetorian donatives are rarely given in our sources. The ratio established by Augustus and Tiberius (legionaries receiving 30% of what praetorians received) might

<sup>65</sup> Sulpicianus had offered 5,000, the same as Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus.

<sup>66</sup> Veyne (1990), 336 and 438 n. 135.

have been maintained, with increases in praetorian donatives reflected in legionary donatives.<sup>67</sup> However, Plutarch's report that Nymphidius Sabinus promised the praetorians 7,500 denarii each, and the legionaries 1,250 (roughly 17%) does not suggest that a 30% ratio was maintained – and if legionaries were being paid 30% of the 3750 denarii donative which both Claudius and Nero paid, the cost to the treasury could be up to 140 million sesterces.<sup>68</sup>

Furthermore, although accession donatives were standard, it is unclear whether the other donatives mentioned in our sources were exceptional, or regular but not always mentioned. That adoptions were customarily accompanied by donatives is suggested by the anger of the soldiery when Galba failed to offer a donative upon adopting Piso (though it is unclear whether this would have been given only to the praetorians).<sup>69</sup> It is also possible that the entire army involved in a campaign was given a standard monetary reward upon its successful conclusion. According to Dio, Marcus Aurelius' soldiers requested money after success in the Marcomannic Wars – the emperor refused this request, stating that any money they received above the 'established amount' (*τὸ καθεστηκός*) would be 'wrung from the blood of their parents and kinsmen'.<sup>70</sup> This may suggest that there was a specific amount usually given to soldiers upon the conclusion of a campaign. After concluding his peace with Decebalus, Domitian distributed money to the soldiers,<sup>71</sup> and in the tradition of stories which cast Caligula as making a mockery of the imperial office, both Dio and Suetonius claim that he distributed money after his ridiculous military manoeuvres as if they were real victories – after conquering the ocean,<sup>72</sup> after

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<sup>67</sup> Campbell (1984), 167.

<sup>68</sup> Assuming 25 x 5,000-men legions, with each of those 125,000 men receiving 1125 denarii.

<sup>69</sup> Suet. *Gal.* 17; Tac. *Hist.* 1.18.

<sup>70</sup> Dio 71.3.3.

<sup>71</sup> Dio 67.7.3

<sup>72</sup> Suet. *Cal.* 46.

crossing the bridge between Puteoli and Bauli,<sup>73</sup> and after murdering Lepidus, ‘as if he had defeated some enemies’ (*καθάπερ πολέμιων τινῶν κεκρατηκώς*).<sup>74</sup> On the other hand, the suggestion that *donativa* were regularly paid on the annual and quinquennial anniversaries of the *dies imperii* is, as Hebblewhite points out, without sufficient evidence.<sup>75</sup>

It should also be noted that donatives were not always paid in full – Pliny praises Trajan for only paying the soldiers half of their donative upon his accession,<sup>76</sup> Pertinax only fulfilled half his promise to the praetorians and died before giving anything to the legionaries,<sup>77</sup> and Severus apparently gave only 10% of the donative he promised.<sup>78</sup> It may have been normal to pay donatives in stages. Watson accepts the claim of Vegetius that ‘It was a provident institution of the ancients, that of each donative that the men received, one half should be kept with the colours and saved there for the men themselves to prevent it from being wasted by them through extravagance or the purchase of useless articles’,<sup>79</sup> on the basis that in the auxiliary pay account *P. Berlin 6866 (RMR 70)*, most of the soldiers possess exactly 100 denarii *in deposito*, which Watson identifies as the compulsorily retained portion of the donative.<sup>80</sup> Although these precise amounts are curious, it remains uncertain whether auxiliaries received donatives at this time, and so this identification is shaky.

As Campbell points out, it is impossible to know how many donatives were given out in each reign.<sup>81</sup> Added to the fact that legionaries always received considerably less than praetorians, and were not given some of the same donatives that they were, it seems

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<sup>73</sup> Dio 59.17.8.

<sup>74</sup> Dio 59.22.7.

<sup>75</sup> Hebblewhite (2017), 73; suggested e.g. by Bastien (1988), 12-13.

<sup>76</sup> Plin. *Pan.* 25.2.

<sup>77</sup> *SHA Pertinax* 15.7.

<sup>78</sup> *SHA Sev.* 7.6.

<sup>79</sup> Veg. *Mil.* 2.20: *Illud uero ab antiquis diuinitus insitutum est, ut ex donatiuo, quod milites consecuntur, dimidia pars sequestraretur apud signa et ibidem ipsis militibus seruaretur, ne per luxum aut inanium rerum comparationem ab contubernalibus posset absumi.*

<sup>80</sup> Watson (1969), 104-5.

<sup>81</sup> Campbell (1984), 188-9.

probable that a legionary might hope to gain a few hundred denarii as a result of *donativa*, but would not be significantly enriched in the way that the praetorians were. This would change in the third century, but before this time, the *donativum* was simply a welcome bonus and a symbolic reminder of the troops' special relationship with the emperor.<sup>82</sup>

### Discharge Bonus

The third non-conditional source of income for a soldier was his discharge bonus, which he received upon completion of service, provided his discharge was honourable.

Originally, these bonuses took the form of land grants – perhaps 50 *iugera*, enough to provide for a family and generate a surplus.<sup>83</sup> However, due to tensions among civilians caused by the land confiscations required to supply these discharge allotments,<sup>84</sup> and possibly disaffection among the soldiers at the quality of the land,<sup>85</sup> grants of cash came to replace grants of land. According to Dio, in AD 5 the discharge bonus was set at 3,000 denarii for legionaries and 5,000 denarii for praetorians.<sup>86</sup> These amounts apparently remained unaltered until Caracalla increased them to 5,000 denarii per legionary and some unspecified higher amount for praetorians.<sup>87</sup>

Of course, since many – perhaps most – legionaries would not have served a full term of service, not all would actually receive their discharge bonus<sup>88</sup> (a convenient fact for a cash-strapped Tiberius),<sup>89</sup> though one cannot say how many potential recruits, weighing up the attractiveness of a military career, factored in the possibility of an early

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<sup>82</sup> Rathbone (2009), 312.

<sup>83</sup> Keppie (1983), 122-7.

<sup>84</sup> Suet. *Aug.* 13.3; Pollard (2006), 207.

<sup>85</sup> If Tac. *Ann.* 1.17 and its claims of *uligines paludum vel inculta montium* can be generalised.

<sup>86</sup> Dio 55.23.1.

<sup>87</sup> Speidel (1992a), 105; Dio 77.24.

<sup>88</sup> Scheidel (2007), 426-7.

<sup>89</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 48.2.

demise. Furthermore, it is unknown whether men who received an early but honourable discharge (*missio causaria*) for reasons such as illness or wounds were eligible for any sort of discharge bonus.<sup>90</sup>

Until Domitian's pay rise, the legionary discharge bonus amounted to over 13 years' pay; thereafter, it amounted to ten years' pay. These amounts, then, were fairly generous, and like the land grants they replaced, would set up a veteran for life (assuming a moderate amount of financial prudence). The effect of withholding this bounty until discharge would have been to discourage desertion and encourage good service, since ignominious discharge would forfeit the retirement bonus.

### Non-Regular Sources of Remuneration

Now that we have discussed regular and non-conditional sources of remuneration, we must discuss sources of remuneration conditional on good service, exceptional deeds, and individual initiative. The reason for this distinction, as mentioned above, is that the following sources of remuneration would motivate soldiers to perform their duties conspicuously well, or in the case of booty, to be more eager for aggressive military action.

### Awards

In the Republic, generals had extensive authority to distribute booty as they saw fit,<sup>91</sup> often at triumphs.<sup>92</sup> It should be noted that although these small cash rewards were differentiated according to rank (e.g. double quantities for centurions and triple quantities for

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<sup>90</sup> Herz (2007), 317.

<sup>91</sup> Shatzman (1972), argues that this authority was absolute; Churchill (1999) disputes this, arguing that generals were required to bear in mind the public interest, but does not dispute that lavishing the army was a legitimate use.

<sup>92</sup> E.g. Livy 39.5.17, 40.59.2, 45.43.3.

cavalrymen),<sup>93</sup> the rewards do not seem to have been adjusted to account for individual or unit gallantry. In terms of remunerative motivation, then, soldiers would have wished to see the successful conclusion of a campaign but might not have stood to gain from particular individual bravery as far as these payments were concerned. It seems that in the Principate, payments associated with triumphs ceased,<sup>94</sup> although as discussed above, it is unclear whether donatives were given after successful campaigns. No doubt elite reluctance to indulge the soldiers' greed discouraged the use of large cash gifts as rewards; and furthermore, cash gifts during the Principate seem only to have been given out by emperors, or in campaigns in which members of the imperial family were present – this makes sense, since all financial reward had to be seen as coming from the emperor.<sup>95</sup> It might therefore be the case that regular commanders were not allowed to dispense money, or refrained from doing so for fear of being accused of bribery or corrupting the soldiers, as was the case with Piso (discussed in the previous chapter).

A variety of symbolic awards were given for acts of specific bravery, such as torques and crowns. It is near-impossible to assess how commonly such awards were given to ordinary soldiers: there is an overall paucity of tombstone inscriptions recording *dona* for *milites*, due to the nature of the evidence – the lower-paid soldiers were less able to afford fine tombstones, and those who gained promotion – greatly aided by their *dona*, presumably – omit their history among the lower ranks.<sup>96</sup> Lists of soldiers serving in particular units, which mark out decorated soldiers (using *d.d.*, i.e. *donis donatus*), constitute the only type of source which gives any sense of proportion.<sup>97</sup> Of 150 soldiers listed in *legio VII Claudia*, recruited in 169 and discharged in 195, ten are recorded with

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<sup>93</sup> Livy. 39.5.17.

<sup>94</sup> Maxfield (1981), 60.

<sup>95</sup> Campbell (1984), 202.

<sup>96</sup> Maxfield (1981), 184.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 136-41, 215-7.

decorations;<sup>98</sup> of 69 soldiers who were recruited to the praetorian guard between 153 and 156 and discharged between 169 and 172, nine are recorded with decorations.<sup>99</sup> The proportion of decorated men in these documents is thus far higher than that indicated by the tombstone evidence.

If the discrepancy in pay between *milites* and officers was deliberately intended to widen the social gap between the two groups, this may also have been the case for military decorations: unlike in the late Republic, when *milites* could win a variety of decorations, under the Principate only the minor awards (*torques*, *armillae*, *phalerae*) were realistically available to non-officers; the crowns, *hastae purae* and *vexilla* were now reserved for officers.<sup>100</sup>

However, the value of these awards ‘lay more in what they represented than in the weight of bullion from which they were made.’<sup>101</sup> Valerius Maximus relates a story in which Labienus advises Scipio to give a brave trooper golden bracelets as a reward; Scipio refuses because the man had recently been a slave, and instead offers gold from the Gallic booty. The cavalryman sullenly refuses, but is delighted to accept an offer of silver bracelets, i.e. a less monetarily valuable prize, but one which properly reflects his *gloria*.<sup>102</sup> These rewards, then, relied on the soldier’s internalisation of martial values, while financial rewards for particular brave action were rare.

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<sup>98</sup> *CIL* III, 14507.

<sup>99</sup> *CIL* VI, 2381.

<sup>100</sup> Maxfield (1981), 213.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 56-7.

<sup>102</sup> Val. Max. 8.14.5; *nulla est ergo tanta humilitas quae dulcedine gloriae non tangatur* is Valerius’ conclusion.

## Booty

Another way that legionaries could supplement their meagre *stipendia* was through booty. Naturally, opportunities for plunder were dependent on the location in which a legion was stationed: some soldiers saw little or no combat at all in the course of service, and others were engaged only in desultory skirmishes which yielded minimal plunder. Tacitean exaggeration aside, the destitution of the Pannonian legionaries who served for *tricena aut quadragena stipendia*, probably consisting mainly of the sort of low-level raids in which Germanicus is described as leading them, would suggest that the men brought back very little from these campaigns.<sup>103</sup> Larger-scale campaigns were infrequent, though far more lucrative – after the sack of Jerusalem, claims Josephus, the soldiers were so laden with plunder that the price of gold halved in Syria.<sup>104</sup> It has been suggested that the sudden burst of detailed praetorian tombstones under Trajan and Hadrian resulted partly from the soldiers' increased wealth gained through the booty from the Dacian wars.<sup>105</sup>

Furthermore, even when there were opportunities for taking booty, there were restrictions on individual soldiers appropriating plunder – at least in theory. Restrictions on plundering, at least in the minds of Roman antiquarians, had a long history: Cincius, cited in Aulus Gellius, claims that the oath of the *dilectus antiquitus* enjoined men 'not to commit a theft with malicious intent, either alone or with others, of more than the value of a silver sesterce in any one day. And except for one spear, a spear shaft, wood, fruit, fodder, a bladder, a purse and a torch, if you find or carry off anything there which is not your own and is worth more than one silver sesterce, you will bring it to [the consuls].'<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 1.17.

<sup>104</sup> Jos. *BJ.* 6.317.

<sup>105</sup> Dobson and Breeze (1969), 115.

<sup>106</sup> Gell. *NA.* 16.4.2: *furtum non facies dolo malo solus neque cum pluribus pluris nummi argentei in dies singulos; extraque hastam, hastile, ligna, poma, pabulum, utrem, follem, faculam si quid ibi inveneris sustulerisve quod tuum non erit, quod pluris nummi argentei erit, uti tu ad C. Laelium C. filium consullem Luciumve Cornelium P. filium sive quem ad tuter eorum iusserit proferes, aut profitebere in triduo proximo*

In Polybius' description of Roman city sacks, he claims that plundering began only at a given signal, and all soldiers turned over their booty to the officers<sup>107</sup> (though Ziolkowski argues that this is an idealised model).<sup>108</sup>

There is evidence that these restrictions were also in place during the Principate: Tacitus, imagining the Flavian soldiers' thoughts prior to the sack of Cremona, claims that they were keen to sack the city at night in order to have more licence to plunder (*maiolem rapiendi licentiam*); if the city were to surrender during daylight, its wealth would go only to the purses of the legates and prefects.<sup>109</sup> Indeed, given the fact that emperors keenly paraded plunder from their conquests during triumphs (Domitian apparently even provided 'fake' spoils for his triumph over Decebalus),<sup>110</sup> and paid for works *ex manubiis*, we must imagine that plundering was organised in order that the spoils would be gathered for the state.<sup>111</sup> Onasander advocated a controlled system, with plundering not allowed after every battle, prisoners strictly the property of the general, and not every kind of property subject to seizure (the text is comically vague on this point: οὐδ' αἰεὶ πάντων, ἀλλ' ὧν μὲν, ὧν δ' οὐ).<sup>112</sup> The jurist Modestinus argued that *praedam ab hostibus captam* belonged to the state, and individuals stealing it were liable to prosecution under laws concerning *peculatus*.<sup>113</sup> This suggests, of course, that individuals did sometimes make off with booty (and indeed, contrary juridical statements exist which grant *praeda* to its seizer),<sup>114</sup> just as

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*quidquid inveneris sustulerisve dolo malo, aut domino suo, cuium id censebis esse, reddes, uti quod rectum factum esse voles.*

<sup>107</sup> Polyb. 10.15.4-16.9.

<sup>108</sup> Ziolkowski (1993).

<sup>109</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 3.19.

<sup>110</sup> Dio 67.7.

<sup>111</sup> Mattem (1999), 149-54.

<sup>112</sup> Onas. 35.1.

<sup>113</sup> *D.* 48.13.15.

<sup>114</sup> *D.* 41.1.5.7, 41.2.1.1, 41.2.3.21, (as cited by Phang 2008, 160 n. 31, though it is unclear how far they all relate to individual soldiers' seizure of booty: *D.* 41.1.5.7 seems to be a more general statement on the natural rightness of plunder according to *ius gentium*, following a series of statements on animal ownership; likewise 41.2.3.21; 41.2.1.1 may be closer, specifying that spoils belong to *qui primus eorum possessionem nactus est*; in all of these cases, however, it may be the case that the jurists had in mind the generals rather than the soldiers under their command.

Onasander's advice suggests variation in practice.

We shall return to the reality of plunder shortly; first, let us explore the four key reasons why individual acquisition of booty was supposed to be restricted. These were both practical and ideological. First, as we have seen, the Roman elite was highly suspicious of *milites* acquiring wealth at all; soldiers were viewed as rapacious, greedy, and incapable of using their wealth in civilised ways.<sup>115</sup> In a curious passage, Tacitus claims that Cerialis' soldiers asked to sack Colonia Trevirorum in retaliation for attacks on Roman camps during the revolt of Julius Civilis, and as proof of their purely vengeful motivations, offered to let the plunder go to the imperial treasury.<sup>116</sup> This would seem to anticipate a general suspicion on the part of their commanders that soldiers were keen to sack cities in order to gain wealth (in the end, Cerialis did not consent to the sack, fearing infamy *si licentia saevitiaque imbuere militem crederetur*).

Secondly, plundering could expose soldiers to danger – Onasander warns generals not to allow undisciplined searches for plunder when entering a rich hostile country, and to punish those soldiers who attempt it, lest they be caught scattered and disordered by the enemy<sup>117</sup> (foraging was also conducted under strict discipline, for the same reason).<sup>118</sup> Connected to this was the ideological conviction that pillaging as an activity undermined discipline and led to moral licence;<sup>119</sup> it was also associated with the camp-followers so often connected with indiscipline, as in Tacitus' *calonum lixarumque amplior numerus et in libidinem ac saevitiam corruptior* at Cremona.<sup>120</sup>

Thirdly, although pillage, rape, and arson were standard components of Roman military practice (cf. the ravaging of Galilee during the Jewish War, or Corbulo's plan to

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<sup>115</sup> Phang (2008), 155-6.

<sup>116</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 4.72.

<sup>117</sup> Onas. 10.7-8; cf. Tac. *Ann.* 4.48.

<sup>118</sup> Roth (1999), 140-1.

<sup>119</sup> E.g. Sal. *Iug.* 44.5.

<sup>120</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 3.33.

devastate hostile regions and spare those which surrendered),<sup>121</sup> there were times when such activities could be detrimental to military efficiency. Some tales from the late Republic illustrate this well, including the failure of Lucullus' soldiers to catch Mithridates when they began arguing over one of the king's baggage mules loaded with treasure,<sup>122</sup> and a story of Pompeian soldiers distracted for days digging for buried treasure.<sup>123</sup>

Despite the restrictions intended to avoid these consequences, in reality it would be difficult to prevent soldiers from making off with small amounts of booty – as Ziolkowski puts it, 'once a thing got lost under the legionary's cloak, there was no power on earth which could snatch it away'.<sup>124</sup> However, Roth argues against Ziolkowski, calling his view 'a misapprehension of Roman discipline', and noting that Cato (quoted in Frontinus) claims that soldiers caught stealing from civilians could have their hands cut off.<sup>125</sup> Given the disorder inherent in the process of plundering, the potential unscrupulousness of supervising officers, and the fact that we do not hear of legionaries having their tents, baggage, or persons searched, it seems more likely that small amounts of unauthorised booty could be sequestered, but no worthwhile quantity of movable wealth could really be hoarded without detection. Often, booty would have been immediately sold for cash, bought by the many traders who followed the army for precisely this sort of opportunity.<sup>126</sup>

Mass acquisition of plunder by individuals was only viable if a commander decided to indulge his troops. In the Republic, generals often distributed large amounts of booty to their soldiers, as when Cicero, after his siege of Pindenissus, turned over all booty to his soldiers except for the horses.<sup>127</sup> Livy describes Decius' army conquering Murgantia,

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<sup>121</sup> Dio 62.20.

<sup>122</sup> Cic. *Leg. Man.* 22-3; Plut. *Luc.* 17.4-7.

<sup>123</sup> Plut. *Pomp.* 11.3-4.

<sup>124</sup> Ziolkowski (1993), 90.

<sup>125</sup> Roth (1999), 148-50; Front. *Strat.* 10.6.2.

<sup>126</sup> Hollander (2005), 233-4.

<sup>127</sup> Cic. *Att.* 5.20.5.

Romulea, then Ferentinum in the Third Samnite War, spurred on by their commander's promises of plunder – but Livy has Decius tell his soldiers *ego subinde suggeram quae uendatis*, indicating that the disbursement of plunder to the soldiers was his prerogative (naturally, this may reflect the conventions of Livy's own day rather than those of the early third century BC).<sup>128</sup>

However, generals could not always maintain control over their troops. During Augustus' sack and burning of Perugia, Velleius Paterculus reports (no doubt following the official line) that 'the cruel treatment of the people of Perugia was due rather to the fury of the soldiers than the wish of their commander.'<sup>129</sup> The *African War* reports that after the Battle of Thapsus, surrendering Pompeians were killed to a man despite the entreaties of Caesar himself.<sup>130</sup> To be sure, such stories have the purpose of exonerating commanders – in the late Republic especially, when the soldiers expected plunder but their generals might want to avoid rapacious reputations, commanders could shift responsibility away from themselves without actively trying to stop their soldiers.

In the late Republic – when there was no regular bonus paid to soldiers upon their exit from the army – plunder was certainly a key incentive for soldiers to serve, and perhaps expected as a supplement to a *stipendium* which at that time had little purpose other than daily maintenance. After a hard winter campaign without action against the enemy, Caesar rewarded his troops with 200 sesterces each in place of plunder (*praedae nomine*).<sup>131</sup> However, under the more rationalised pay system during the Principate, soldiers' wealth came under greater control, and plunder was channelled to the imperial

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<sup>128</sup> Livy 10.17.

<sup>129</sup> Vell. Pat. 2.74: *in Perusinos magis ira militum quam voluntate saevitum ducis*.

<sup>130</sup> *B. Afr.* 85.

<sup>131</sup> Hirt. *BG.* 8.4.

coffers (much of it ultimately, of course, returned to the army in the form of pay and donatives).<sup>132</sup>

### Promotion

In this chapter so far, I have considered the lowliest possible soldier, the ordinary *miles* – but a soldier might be promoted and earn more than the basic wage, possibly even attaining the position of centurion, which came with 15 times the basic legionary pay.

Breeze tabulates the career structure beneath the centurionate:<sup>133</sup>

| Rank                               | Pay  | Post  |
|------------------------------------|--|---|
| <i>Miles</i><br><br><i>Immunis</i> | Basic  | Technicians and specialists   |
| <i>Principalis</i>                 | Pay and a half<br>( <i>sesquiplicarius</i> )<br><br>Double pay<br>( <i>duplicarius</i> ) | Junior staff officers, <i>tesserarius</i> , possibly <i>armorum custos</i> . (In the third century, some <i>librarii</i> and <i>exacti</i> .)<br><br><i>Optio</i> , <i>signifer</i> , standard bearers, senior staff officers (some of whom may have been equites). |

According to Breeze, this scheme is applicable for the period from Hadrian to Severus.

Although the term *immunis* is not attested prior to the reign of Hadrian, there was clearly a class of specialists which existed prior to this time (Watson suggests that nine of the

<sup>132</sup> Phang (2008), ch. 5.

<sup>133</sup> Breeze (1971), 134. Le Roux (2012) denies that *sesquiplicarii* and *duplicarii* were pay grades; see the response of Speidel (2014), 59-62.

predisposed men on the duty roster of *legio III Cyrenaica* were *immunes*).<sup>134</sup> The terms *duplicarius* and *sesquiplicarius* are attested prior to Hadrian (though examples from legions are lacking),<sup>135</sup> and the term *principalis* is attested as early as AD 107.<sup>136</sup> It is difficult to trace the origins of the various pay-grades, but it would not be unreasonable to assume certain positions such as that of *signifer* or *optio* had always been accompanied by extra pay.

It would seem that some soldiers began in clerical *immunis* posts (*librarius* or *exactus*), before becoming a *principalis* with the hope of eventual advancement to the centurionate.<sup>137</sup> If Breeze is correct, there may have been two *sesquiplicarii* per century (the *tesserarius* and *armorum custos*) and two *duplicarii* (the *optio* and *signifer*), with perhaps 65 or more *duplicarii* throughout the legion (the posts of *aquilifer*, *frumentarius*, *beneficiarius legati*, *beneficiarius consularis*, *speculator*, *cornicularius praefecti*, *cornicularius tribuni*, and *cornicularius consularis*).<sup>138</sup> The vast majority of soldiers, therefore, would remain on ordinary pay.

The real prize was the centurionate, available to even fewer soldiers. Some have attempted to calculate an average legionary's chances of becoming a centurion. Maxfield, for example, calculated that since the average centurion seems to have served for perhaps 16 years, about four posts became available each year to be competed for by 200 in any one year group. Estimating on the basis of the UN model life tables that 70-75% of each year's intake would survive to the optimal age for promotion to the centurionate (30-35), there would be between 35-38 contenders for each post.<sup>139</sup> (Scheidel suggests that violent death, camp-related disease and early discharge would have raised the rate of attrition

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<sup>134</sup> Watson (1969), 75-9; *RMR* 9.

<sup>135</sup> E.g. *AE* 1990, 386.

<sup>136</sup> *P. Mich.* 8.465, line 16 (πριγκιπάλις).

<sup>137</sup> Breeze (1974), 277-8.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 274.

<sup>139</sup> Maxfield (1981), 243-4.

beyond the prediction of the model life table,<sup>140</sup> but it may be countered that regular diet and access to medical care would have significantly mitigated the rate.)

However, these calculations must be nuanced in two ways. Firstly, there were two key sources of centurions besides promotion from the ranks. One of these was direct commission from the equestrian order, through the system of patronage.<sup>141</sup> Pliny, for instance, describes obtaining a command for a his fellow townsman Metilius Crispus,<sup>142</sup> and Juvenal suggests that direct commission to the centurionate (*uitem posce libello*) might be an alternative to becoming a lawyer or trader.<sup>143</sup> Direct commission is sometimes explicitly stated in career inscriptions (e.g. *CIL VI, 3584: ex eq.*).<sup>144</sup>

The other source of centurions was transfer from the praetorian guard. Domaszewski made two important claims about centurion origins which became widely accepted: first, that a key qualification for entry to the centurionate was Italian origin, and that from Hadrian to Severus, most centurions came from the ranks of the praetorians.<sup>145</sup> This was disputed by Eric Birley, who, referring to a neglected 1900 thesis by Walter Baehr, attempted to re-establish the principle that ‘the bulk of the legionary centurions were always promoted legionaries, and their origins [were] broadly the same as those of the soldiers in the same legions.’<sup>146</sup> Birley demonstrates first that the evidence does not support Domaszewski’s belief in a mostly Italian centurionate, and secondly, that although praetorians do seem to have had greater chances of promotion to the higher posts than their legionary counterparts, our limited evidence does not indicate that the majority of centurions had prior service in the guard.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Scheidel (2007), 426.

<sup>141</sup> See Dobson (1972) on the attractiveness of becoming a centurion to equestrians.

<sup>142</sup> Plin. *Ep.* 6.25.

<sup>143</sup> Juv. 14.189-209.

<sup>144</sup> Further examples in Breeze and Dobson (1969), 109-11.

<sup>145</sup> Domaszewski and Dobson (1967).

<sup>146</sup> Birley (1988), 190.

<sup>147</sup> See further Breeze and Dobson (1969).

Although it seems that the majority of centurions were promoted from the ranks, many clearly also came from the praetorian guard or the equestrian order. Although the evidence precludes us from determining what proportion of centurions came from which source, these men without prior service as legionaries would block a sizeable number of centurion posts for the legionaries (indeed, this may be one reason for legionary resentment towards the praetorians).

The second caveat when discussing the likelihood of a *miles* becoming a centurion is the fact that the role – and indeed the *principalis* posts which preceded it – required a familiarity with literacy and numeracy which many recruits to the army would not have possessed. I have already discussed the difficulties with estimating literacy within the legions, and noted the example of Julius Apollinaris, fast-tracked to the position of *librarius* with hopes for further advancement (*ἐφ' ἐλπίδων*).<sup>148</sup> Likewise, Apion, a recruit to the navy, thanked his father for his education, and the quick advancement he hoped to gain from it (*με ἐπαίδευσας καλῶς, καὶ ἐκ τούτου ἐλπίζω ταχὺ προκόσαι*).<sup>149</sup>

It seems reasonable to conclude that a social divide existed not only between the *milites* and the centurions,<sup>150</sup> but also between two kinds of *milites*: those who entered the army with little or no education, wealth, or prospects, for whom the risks and toil of military life seemed worth undertaking in exchange for what amounted to lifetime financial security, but were unlikely ever to attain promotion; and those who, like Apollinaris, entered the army with literacy and skills which would exempt them from menial labour and give them an immediate advantage. Although it is not inconceivable that training in literacy and numeracy could be provided to highly gifted recruits on the job, there is no evidence for this occurring. The famous career of Petronius Fortunatus may

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<sup>148</sup> *P. Mich.* VIII. 466, lines 18-32.

<sup>149</sup> *BGU* 423, lines 16-18.

<sup>150</sup> On which see the next chapter.

serve as one example of a career stimulated by literacy upon recruitment: beginning as a *librarius*, he then served as a *tesserarius*, *optio*, and *signifer* before becoming a centurion.<sup>151</sup> A recruit of the more educated kind was not necessarily the immediate beneficiary of higher pay – accession to double-pay positions seems to have taken at least six years of service<sup>152</sup> – but he could very well have expected an *immunis* role.

The more educated recruits might therefore expect to compete mainly with other educated soldiers for access to the centurionate – added to the fact that units were often understrength, his realistic competitors would have been considerably less numerous than might first appear. Not that promotion came quickly or easily – for most of the centurions for whom sufficient data exists, promotion occurred after 15-20 years of service,<sup>153</sup> and many *principales* retired without further promotion.<sup>154</sup> Access to the centurionate was therefore not as easily attained as some optimistic treatments of the army as an engine of social mobility claim,<sup>155</sup> especially for men who entered the army without distinguishing skills or education.

In conclusion, many aspects of the pay system, such as deductions and retirement bonuses, would have had cost-saving benefits for the state, but may also have been designed to generate loyalty among the soldiers. Suetonius explains that Augustus set up his pay and pension system ‘so that after retirement, they might not be tempted either by age or poverty to side with the advocates of revolution’ (*ne aut aetate aut inopia post missionem sollicitari ad res novas possent*);<sup>156</sup> as Pollard puts it, ‘his genius lay not in winning battles but in reforming the Roman army in a manner that ensured that he was not replaced in the

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<sup>151</sup> *CIL* VIII, 217.

<sup>152</sup> Breeze (1974), 277.

<sup>153</sup> Dobson and Breeze (1969), 103.

<sup>154</sup> Breeze (1974), 275-8.

<sup>155</sup> E.g. Patterson (1993), 97.

<sup>156</sup> Suet. *Aug.* 49.2; cf. Dio 54.25.5-6.

same way he had come to power'.<sup>157</sup> Augustus' desire for stability led to a pay system which forced soldiers to wait for their discharge bonuses to gain any real wealth, while restricting soldiers' access to booty and handouts from commanders reduced the ability of other commanders to entice the troops. Tacitus claims that one of the causes of Vitellius' revolt was that 'the army, flushed with the delights of plunder and glory, as men might well be who had been fortunate enough to triumph without toil or danger in a most lucrative war, began to hanker after campaigns and battles, and to prefer *praemia* to *stipendia*.'<sup>158</sup>

In terms of the compliance theory framework, remunerative motivation would certainly be sufficient for a legionary to sign up and serve dutifully. Any major disciplinary breaches would have risked jeopardising the highly valuable retirement bonus, making obedience to authority something highly incentivised. This was perhaps the single most important aspect of the legionary pay system – a soldier's ultimate reward came from fulfilling a long term of service, not from the completion of a specific job or campaign. Booty was not something that most imperial legionaries could expect to profit from when they signed up – whether or not they saw action. Likewise, awards for good service were not common, and were more symbolic than financially worthwhile, pointing more towards normative than remunerative motivation for attaining these rewards. *Donativa* were not quite the huge bonus for legionaries that they were for the praetorians, so we ought not imagine that legionaries were particularly motivated in financial terms to wish for a change of emperor. Nonetheless, *donativa* were certainly welcome and kept the soldiers well-disposed to a new emperor.

In terms of pay, legionaries did reasonably well compared to what an unskilled or

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<sup>157</sup> Pollard (2006), 207.

<sup>158</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 1.51: *praeda gloriaque exercitus, ut cui sine labore ac periculo ditissimi belli victoria evenisset, expeditionem et aciem, praemia quam stipendia malebat.*

semi-skilled worker might expect in civilian society, even if the deduction system left them with rather little to spend on their own initiative.<sup>159</sup> The very idea of regular, guaranteed pay would no doubt have been highly appealing. There were certainly plausible practical reasons for the deduction system, but we should also consider that psychologically, it further intertwined the legionary's life with that of the army. The bonds of community examined in the previous three chapters – to one's close primary group; to the legion, which we might consider like one's town or village or tribe; to the emperor, one's provider – could only have been strengthened by this near-complete financial coupling.

Acts of payment, indeed, were sometimes accompanied by ceremony. Josephus describes Titus distributing pay to his men in full regalia before the walls of Jerusalem,<sup>160</sup> and Arrian describes how he paired his distribution of pay to the men at Apsarus with an inspection of their weapons and fortifications,<sup>161</sup> while at Sebastopolis he witnessed horse manoeuvres.<sup>162</sup> Even before a soldier truly entered the army, he received his *viatica*, the remainder of which would be deposited with the legion. At every stage of a legionary's career, money reified his commitment to the army. The strong symbolic association of remuneration with the figure of the emperor himself was also an important way in which the soldier's loyalty was tied to the state figurehead.

In later chapters, we will discuss the extent to which the military was a closed environment; this system of financial attachment could only have furthered insularity. Overall, the pay system of the Roman army was not one which provided remunerative incentives for specific actions, but rather one which was designed to enmesh the interests of the soldier with those of the army, and keep him loyal and obedient for an extended

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<sup>159</sup> We have very few examples to draw on – see e.g. Duncan-Jones (1978), 161. A useful comparison might be a guard from Arsinoe in Egypt in AD 92, paid 40 drachmae a month – less than half a legionary's pay.

<sup>160</sup> Jos. *BJ.* 5.349-51.

<sup>161</sup> Arr. *Peripl.* 6.

<sup>162</sup> Arr. *Peripl.* 10.

period of time. We might therefore see this system as heightening normative motivation, by further assimilating the soldier with the military.

## Chapter 5: Discipline

In the previous chapter, I explored the ways in which the army's pay system aimed to secure the long-term loyalty of the soldiers. In this chapter, I turn to the punitive side of motivation. One of the most famous aspects of the Roman army, justifiably or not, is its severe punishments, particularly the practice of decimation. Discipline certainly made a firm impression on foreign observers of the army in ancient times – Polybius described at length the various offences which could be punished by flogging or beating to death,<sup>1</sup> and Josephus emphasised that Roman soldiers were ‘hardened for war by fear; for their laws inflict capital punishments, not only for soldiers running away from the ranks, but for slothfulness and inactivity, though it be but in a lesser degree.’<sup>2</sup> Modern observers have been similarly struck:<sup>3</sup> Chrissanthos claims that the Roman army's system of discipline ‘represents something completely new in ancient Mediterranean warfare’, with infractions ‘systematically punished’.<sup>4</sup>

However, it has also been argued that our limited evidence is insufficient to support claims of widespread coercion in the Roman army, or even that the evidence suggests the opposite. Perhaps ‘we believe in ancient floggings because we want to’, and thus from limited examples of harsh punishments we have extrapolated a system of brutality which never truly existed.<sup>5</sup> Even in 1920, Messer was able to point out an exaggerated view of Roman military discipline both among specialists and within the popular imagination.<sup>6</sup>

A key weakness of any system which relies too heavily on coercion is that this

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<sup>1</sup> Polyb. 6.37-8.

<sup>2</sup> Jos. *BJ*. 3.102-3: *Παρασκευάζουσι μὲν οὖν ἐν ταῖς μελέταις τῶν ὀπλῶν οὐ τὰ σώματα μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς ψυχὰς ἀλκίμους, προσασκοῦνται δὲ καὶ τῷ φόβῳ. οἳ τε γὰρ νόμοι παρ' αὐτοῖς οὐ λιποταξίον μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ῥαστώνης ὀλίγης θανατικοὶ οἳ τε στρατηγοὶ τῶν νόμων φοβερώτεροι: ταῖς γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς τιμαῖς ῥύονται τὸ δοκεῖν ἴμοι πρὸς τοὺς κολαζομένους.*

<sup>3</sup> Kiesling (2006), 225-6.

<sup>4</sup> Chrissanthos (2013).

<sup>5</sup> Kiesling (2006), 245-6.

<sup>6</sup> Messer (1920), 158-62.

form of motivation can only be effective when soldiers are under constant observation and control,<sup>7</sup> and can result just as much in desertion, opportunistic avoidance of combat, and lack of initiative as terrified obedience. But direct punishment constitutes only one way in which discipline can be instilled. This chapter begins by exploring the army's system of training and drill, a key method by which soldiers are taught discipline. The subject of punishment is then treated separately, in the form of three questions: first, how prevalent was punitive discipline in the Roman army? Second, to what extent were Roman soldiers motivated in battle by the threat of punishment if they did not fight well? And finally, how did the system of punishments more generally condition everyday life and social relationships in the army?

### Training

It is rare to find a modern work on the Roman army which does not attribute an enormous part of the army's success to 'training', and yet very few of these works attempt to delineate what training consisted of, or how it translated into military supremacy. Yann Le Bohec made this point strenuously, pointing out that neither *Pauly-Wissowa* nor *Daremborg-Saglio* devote even a short article to the topic, and that most modern historians either ignore the subject or approach it obliquely.<sup>8</sup> The 'standard' texts to which those seeking detail are usually directed are a chapter by Watson<sup>9</sup> and various papers by Davies.<sup>10</sup> Watson's work consists more or less of paraphrasing Vegetius; Davies likewise tends to take Vegetius as the basis for his study, but compares this material to other ancient sources and archaeological evidence more extensively.

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<sup>7</sup> Crowley (2013), 19.

<sup>8</sup> Le Bohec (1994), 105.

<sup>9</sup> Watson (1969), 54-74.

<sup>10</sup> Davies (1989), 41-3, 71-141.

This reliance on Vegetius is to be expected; no other author sets out in comparable detail the standard ways in which legionaries were trained, and why. But uncritical acceptance of Vegetius as a source for the actual training methods of any period of Roman history is extremely problematic, as this chapter will begin by showing. A further problem, as with so much work on the Roman army, is a lack of chronological differentiation: a ‘standard’ model of training is claimed for several centuries of history; and similarly, specific examples of training techniques are claimed to represent standard practices. One question posed by this chapter will be to what extent standard practices ever existed at all.

The ancient sources frequently point to training as a key reason for the Romans’ battlefield success; indeed, Josephus and Vegetius hold it to be the foremost reason. For Josephus, it was *μελέτη* in peace-time which prepared the Romans so well for war,<sup>11</sup> while Vegetius thought that drill and instruction in war were what brought Rome her empire, and might restore her to military pre-eminence in his own day.<sup>12</sup> Varro derived the word for army, *exercitus*, from the verb for exercise, *exercitare* (*exercitus quod exercitando fit melior*);<sup>13</sup> Cicero concurred.<sup>14</sup> Modern military theorists also place great emphasis on training. Huw Strachan, for example, lists five ways in which training is important to modern militaries: to alleviate boredom; to inculcate professional pride and enforce the soldier/civilian distinction; to promote unit cohesion; to assimilate tactical thinking to the point of instinct; and to familiarise recruits with military technology.<sup>15</sup> As we shall see, Roman training had functions analogous to all of Strachan’s points; and as Goldsworthy has emphasised, the creation and maintenance of corporate identities, and the inculcation

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<sup>11</sup> Joseph. *BJ.* 3.72-5.

<sup>12</sup> Veg. *Mil.* 1.1.

<sup>13</sup> Varro, *Ling.* 5.87.

<sup>14</sup> Cic. *Tusc.* 2.37.

<sup>15</sup> Strachan (2006), 216.

and reinforcement of military values, are key aspects of training which are frequently overlooked.<sup>16</sup> It is important to recognise the many purposes of training, and indeed the *indirect* ways in which exercise aimed to improve troop performance; but Roman training was also shaped by aspects of elite ideology, the moral and political preoccupations of which meant that not every aspect of training served as utilitarian a purpose as in Vegetius' efficient schema.

The fullest account of Roman training is to be found in the pages of Vegetius, and his work forms the basis of almost every discussion of training. Any source used as thoroughly as Vegetius ought to receive a commensurate level of scrutiny, but an uncritical nod of approval towards 'our best guide' is more common.<sup>17</sup> In response to the obvious problem that Vegetius composed his work some time from the late fourth to mid-fifth century AD, it is commonly responded that Vegetius worked from far earlier sources, now lost to us. Vegetius provides two notices of his sources: one lists Cato the Censor, Frontinus, Paternus, and 'the constitutions of Augustus, Trajan, and Hadrian';<sup>18</sup> the other emphasises Cato and Frontinus among *alii complures*.<sup>19</sup> However, there are indications that Vegetius worked from late epitomes rather than original sources – material which he himself 'extensively augmented and interpreted'.<sup>20</sup> It is worth quoting Milner's conclusion:

'The accusation that Vegetius confused the institutions of diverse periods of the Roman Empire is, therefore, beside the point. He was not interested in telling the story of the Roman army; he was not an historian, but something more akin to a politician, seeking to reform contemporary institutions and strategic thinking.'<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Goldsworthy (1996), 251-2.

<sup>17</sup> Watson (1969), 54.

<sup>18</sup> *Veg. Mil.* 1.8.

<sup>19</sup> *Veg. Mil.* 2.3.

<sup>20</sup> Milner (1996), xiii-xvii.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, xxviii.

In other words, chronological confusion is inherent to Vegetius' hasty epitome, and its content and emphases accord not with those of his sources, but with his personal thoughts on how best to reform the army of his own day. His statements are prescriptions in the guise of descriptions. Vegetius himself makes a complaint familiar to many a modern classicist: the ancient historians 'wrote only the incidents and dramas of wars, leaving out as familiar that which we are now seeking';<sup>22</sup> given this admission, we ought to reconsider the impression of authoritative knowledge which the work otherwise gives, and be particularly wary of supplementary suppositions or interpretations stemming from the mind of Vegetius.

As well as chronological confusion, Vegetius makes general assertions which, one might reasonably suspect, pertain only to certain situations or branches of service. Vegetius states that 'constant training in vaulting on horseback was to be undertaken *non tantum a tironibus... sed etiam ab stipendiosis militibus*', and wooden horses were used to practice this vaulting.<sup>23</sup> Watson claimed on this basis that even infantry recruits were to perform these exercises; further practice with live horses would be only for cavalry recruits, and perhaps those legionaries who showed particular skill with the wooden horses were given additional cavalry training.<sup>24</sup> On this latter point, aptitude at the peculiar skill of vaulting a horse is hardly an excellent signifier of a good cavalryman; and supposing that an infantryman might benefit from such exercise is neither obvious nor congruent with Vegetius' explanation that practicing the skill will allow for easy mounting and dismounting *in tumultu proelii* (irrelevant to a foot soldier). If Vegetius is specifically addressing an aspect of cavalry training without signalling this at the start of the passage, we might suspect that other passages of his work likewise refer to specific kinds of training

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<sup>22</sup> Veg. *Mil.* 1.8.

<sup>23</sup> Veg. *Mil.* 1.18.

<sup>24</sup> Watson (1969), 61-2.

and – either through confusion or deliberate generalisation – present them as generally relevant.

Davies' work is commendable for attempting to corroborate several passages of Vegetius with older evidence; due to the many problems of Vegetius as a historical source, any passage the modern historian wishes to use from his treatise ought to be carefully checked in this way. But where Vegetius seems to offer credible explanations of the exact purposes or functions of aspects of training, there is simply no way to determine whether these have been genuinely extracted from his sources or are his own elaborations. In most cases, the latter explanation seems more likely by default, considering that everything in the treatise has been selected specifically for Vegetius' contemporary purposes.

We proceed to consider the content of training. Naturally, we ought not expect that practices remained the same across our period: just as the soldiers of the early Republic would have picked up skills here and there on campaign,<sup>25</sup> most legionaries would have learned 'on the job' until Augustus established the continuous term of service, which could allow a regular training programme.<sup>26</sup> Thus we should not be surprised to find that although Josephus' excursus on the army heavily emphasises training and peacetime preparation, the section of Polybius on which it is clearly modelled contains no such emphasis.<sup>27</sup>

The armies of the late Republic saw legionaries serving for such extended periods that they might reasonably be called professionals, even if the decentralised nature of the army precluded a standard programme of training. Determining how the troops were to train throughout the Republic must have been the prerogative of the individual commander, and indeed our best evidence for this period mostly concerns the exemplary

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<sup>25</sup> Rawlings (2007), 49.

<sup>26</sup> Southern (2007), 133-5; cf. Polyb. 3.89.

<sup>27</sup> Polyb. 6.19-42.

methods instituted by famous generals. At New Carthage, Polybius reports that Scipio Africanus had his men train by running in armour on the first day, tending to their armour on the second, resting on the third, and practicing with blunted weapons on the fourth, before restarting the sequence on the fifth day<sup>28</sup> (Livy<sup>29</sup> switches the activities of the third and fourth days – a more sensible order, accepted by many modern scholars).<sup>30</sup> Sallust praises Metellus as a *magnum et sapientem virum* for exercising his men by making them perform marches and encamping.<sup>31</sup> Pompey chose to exercise his new soldiers (*γυμνάζων τοὺς νεοστρατεύτους*) rather than commit to an immediate engagement at Dyrrachium.<sup>32</sup> One occasionally detects differences in personal opinions on the importance of training: prior to the Battle of Trebia, Sempronius desired an immediate engagement with Hannibal, whereas Scipio preferred to keep the men under arms for a winter, and not indulge Hannibal's desire to fight against soldiers *ἀνασκήτοις καὶ νεοσυλλόγοις*.<sup>33</sup>

Training programmes mainly seem to have been short-term responses to specific situations. Faced with light-armed Numidian enemies in Africa, who caused great anxiety as well as casualties with their habit of throwing missiles, retreating, and avoiding melee contact with the legionaries, Caesar began to train his men in a way that he explicitly marks as unusual:

‘Faced with an enemy of this kind Caesar proceeded to train his forces, not as a commander trains a veteran army with a magnificent record of victorious achievements, but as a gladiatorial instructor trains his recruits. How many feet they were to retreat from the enemy; the manner in which they must wheel round

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<sup>28</sup> Polyb. 10.20.1-7.

<sup>29</sup> Livy 26.51.3-5.

<sup>30</sup> Carter (2006), 153 n.1.

<sup>31</sup> Sall. *Iug.* 45.1-2; App. *Hisp.* 86.

<sup>32</sup> App. *BC.* 2.8.56.

<sup>33</sup> Polyb. 3.70.

upon their adversary; the restricted space in which they must offer him resistance — now doubling forward, now retiring and making feint attacks; and almost the spot from which, and the manner in which they must discharge their missiles — these were the lessons he taught them.’

*Caesar contra eiusmodi hostium genera copias suas non ut imperator exercitum veteranum victoremque maximis rebus gestis, sed ut lanista tirones gladiatores condocere; quot pedes se reciperent ab hoste et quem ad modum obversi adversariis et in quantulo spatio resisterent, modo procurrerent modo recederent comminarenturque impetum, ac prope quo loco et quem ad modum tela mitterent, praecipere.*<sup>34</sup>

The first part of this passage is enigmatic; it seems to suggest that training of this kind was almost unbecoming the dignity of such a reputable and experienced force, but to which aspect the author refers is unclear. Are we to understand that a veteran legion did not practice weapons skills, or simply that such detailed exposition of the fundamentals was usually unnecessary for experienced soldiers? Training is generally absent from the Caesarian corpus, and one cannot tell in what way these veterans would usually have expected to train – to the extent that they did at all.

The passage does seem to suggest some basic weapon training was appropriate for new recruits, and the reference to *lanistae* is telling. Publius Rutilius is credited with employing gladiatorial instructors to teach weapon handling to his men,<sup>35</sup> gaining the approval of Marius.<sup>36</sup> There is ample evidence for the use of practice weapons, both wooden swords with protective buttons<sup>37</sup> and *pila praepilata*, which were used in Caesar’s

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<sup>34</sup> *BAfr.* 71 (trans. Way).

<sup>35</sup> Val. Max. 2.3.2.

<sup>36</sup> Front. *Strat.* 4.2.2.

<sup>37</sup> Polyb. 10.20.3-4; Livy 26.51.4, 40.6.5-6.

African training programme for teaching soldiers how to aim at elephants.<sup>38</sup> Clearly, a fresh recruit could not be expected to wield an instrument requiring some technical skill like a *pilum*, and though we might reasonably envisage that individually inducted recruits into existing units could have been taught by their peers on the job, levies of entirely fresh recruits (common enough during the civil wars of the late Republic) would have required preliminary teaching *en masse* (organised probably by the centurions, or the tribunes as at Polyb. 10.20.1). Vegetius seems to recommend extensive practice with wooden weapons against six-foot wooden posts before a man could be expected to fight for real ('neither the arena nor the battlefield ever proved a man invincible in armed combat, unless he was first judged to have been thoroughly trained at the post'),<sup>39</sup> although this is simply one more expression of his notion that no soldier is fit to fight the enemy unless he has been extensively trained;<sup>40</sup> and Vegetius opens so many passages by proclaiming the absolute necessity of the procedure described that none of these statements can be taken seriously.<sup>41</sup>

But exercising new recruits seems more commonly to have involved inuring them to toil than practicing technical skills. The *African War* at one point claims that Caesar 'ordered his troops to return once more to their duties and, on the pretext of the fortifications, kept his recruits constantly employed to the point of exhaustion' (*iubet milites rursus ad opus redire et per causam munitionum tirones in labore defatigare non intermittit*).<sup>42</sup> The text does not explain why Caesar would want to exhaust the *tirones* (specifically) with such labour, especially in the middle of a campaign, but plenty of other late Republican sources attest to the use of military labour as a form of training, including Metellus in Sallust's *Bellum Jugurthinum*, who made his men march across country, build

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<sup>38</sup> *BAfr.* 72.

<sup>39</sup> *Veg. Mil.* 1.11: *Nec umquam aut harena aut campus inuictum armis uirum probauit, nisi qui diligenter exercitatus docebatur ad palum.*

<sup>40</sup> E.g. 2.23.

<sup>41</sup> E.g. 1.7, 1.21, 1.26.

<sup>42</sup> *BAfr.* 32.

camps and fortifications, and made sure that they carried their own provisions and arms.<sup>43</sup>

Arguably, Republican commanders do not seem to connect training to combat performance in a direct way. The famous measures of such commanders as Metellus and Scipio were designed specifically to rectify the slothfulness and low morale of the armies; writing about Metellus exercising his men through marches, Sallust concludes that ‘by preventing rather than punishing irregularities, he in a short time rendered his army effective’ (*ita prohibendo a delictis magis quam vindicando exercitum brevi confirmavit*);<sup>44</sup> he stresses that occupying the men with exercises kept them from indolence and poor behaviour, rather than making them combat-ready. Livy reports that to repudiate the claim that he had relaxed discipline and allowed indolence in his army, Scipio Africanus had his men give the inspecting praetor a display of drill, including manoeuvres and mock battles.<sup>45</sup> In the minds of the elite authors and generals, then, exercises inculcated and demonstrated that the army was *morally* prepared, rather than possessing refined technical skills. Commanding an army was conceived of in moral and social, rather than technical, terms,<sup>46</sup> and mental fortitude and physical stamina were often more important to a battle’s outcome than technical skill.<sup>47</sup>

In terms of preparation for combat itself, experience of battle and a taste of real action seem to have been considered irreplaceable by drill. Polybius frequently comments on battle as a form of training, using the verb *γυμνάζω*, as in the case of Hannibal’s army as it crossed the Alps: *γεγυμνασμένην διαφερόντως ἐκ τῆς συνεχείας τῶν κατὰ τὴν Ἰβηρίαν ἀγώνων*.<sup>48</sup> Small skirmishes, in which few casualties were expected (Polybius suggests

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<sup>43</sup> Sall. *Iug.* 45.2.

<sup>44</sup> Sall. *Iug.* 45.3.

<sup>45</sup> Livy 29.21.13-22.3.

<sup>46</sup> Phang (2008), 6-7.

<sup>47</sup> Goldsworthy (1996), 253-4: ‘...the appearance of confidence in a unit, its capacity to seem solid and steadfast in defence and unstoppable in attack, was often more important in determining the outcome of the fighting than the physical fighting power of the units.’

<sup>48</sup> Polyb. 3.35.8.

that men are not expected to risk their lives in such engagements;<sup>49</sup> compare 27 light-armed dead and one horseman in a skirmish at Utica constituting notable casualties<sup>50</sup>), were typically used to accustom men to combat: Cato claims to have tested his men through *proeliis levibus*.<sup>51</sup> Velleius Paterculus describes how Octavian, ‘wishing to keep his soldiers from being spoiled by idleness, the great enemy of discipline’, undertook military expeditions in Illyricum and Dalmatia, ‘and thus hardening his army by endurance of danger and experience in warfare’ (*ne res disciplinae inimicissima, otium, corrumpet militem, crebris in Illyrico Delmatiaque expeditionibus patientia periculorum bellicae experientia durabat exercitum*).<sup>52</sup> Caesar himself, describing how his men managed the quite exceptional feat of halting mid-charge at Pharsalus, credits not training ground manoeuvre practice but experience gained from former battles (*usu periti ac superioribus pugnis exercitati sua sponte cursum represserunt*).<sup>53</sup> Adam Anders has recently discussed skirmishing as an important form of ‘stress inoculation’, exposing soldiers to combat in a less lethal and decisive form than the pitched battle; this concept certainly accords with the emphasis of the ancient writers.<sup>54</sup>

I have argued that for the armies of the late Republic, the extent and content of training was largely set by individual generals, their decisions determined both by personal preference and situational necessities, with exceptional training in specific skills instituted when necessary. One does see a great deal of similarities in training practices, as commanders were influenced by certain traditional expectations and examples; Fronto, for instance, suggests that Lucius Verus learned from Metellus and Cato, as well as Hadrian,

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<sup>49</sup> Polyb. 6.39.4.

<sup>50</sup> *BAfr.* 61.

<sup>51</sup> Fronto, *Ad Verum Imp.* 2. 1.20.

<sup>52</sup> *Vel. Pat.* 2.78.

<sup>53</sup> *Caes. BC.* 3.93.1.

<sup>54</sup> Anders (2015), 295-7.

when training the army of the East.<sup>55</sup> In the army of the Principate, although Augustus' reforms could conceivably have entailed the complete regularisation of training – something akin to which is usually assumed by modern scholars – there were in fact great continuities from the late Republic in terms of the *irregularity* of practices.

Examples of under-prepared armies which required exceptional remedies abound, suggesting there was no routine set of training practices enforced across the empire.<sup>56</sup> Training was therefore still the prerogative of individual commanders: Galba, taking over the legion of Gaetulicus, immediately instituted a new programme of training: *veteranum ac tironem militem opere assiduo corroboravit*. So marked a change was this from the laxness of his predecessor that a verse became popular in camp: *disce miles militare: Galba est, non Gaetulicus*.<sup>57</sup> For Tacitus, Vitellius' failure to exercise his men was a repulsive reflection of the man's own slothfulness.<sup>58</sup> A number of important late Republican commanders gained approval for training alongside their men, including Marius<sup>59</sup> and Pompey, even in old age.<sup>60</sup> These examples were followed by imperial-era commanders and emperors: Corbulo, lightly clad, marched alongside his men,<sup>61</sup> and Trajan is described as mingling his *pulverem sudoremque* with the common soldiers on field manoeuvres.<sup>62</sup> Naturally, we might wonder how far these rhetorical and moralistic sources exaggerate the personal involvement of the commander, but the notion that a good commander was *supposed* to set a personal example to his men is clear enough.

Nevertheless, there are certain indications that training was increasingly routinized. The clearest is the emergence in the epigraphic record of *campidoctores* and *exercitatores*.

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<sup>55</sup> Fronto, *Ad Verum Imp.* 2. 1.20.

<sup>56</sup> E.g. Tac. *Ann.* 13.35; Suet. *Vesp.* 4.6; Fronto, *Ad Verum Imp.* 2. 1.19.

<sup>57</sup> Suet. *Gal.* 6.2-3.

<sup>58</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 3.36.

<sup>59</sup> Plut. *Mar.* 34.3.

<sup>60</sup> Plut. *Pomp.* 64.1-2; App. *BC.* 2.8.49.

<sup>61</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 13.35.

<sup>62</sup> Plin. *Pan.* 13.1.

In a second century inscription, for example, a certain Caius Cuspius Secundus, legionary centurion of *legio II Adiutrix*, identifies himself as an *exercitator*.<sup>63</sup> Unfortunately, little is known about these individuals – how they were chosen, whether they had to apply for the posts, or if they received extra pay<sup>64</sup> (though Vegetius does claim that *doctores armorum* were so well-regarded that they received double-pay).<sup>65</sup> Praising Trajan’s involvement in training, Pliny complains that ‘our military training is no longer led by one of the veterans wearing the mural or civic crown, but instead by some petty Greek teacher’ (*postquam exercitationibus nostris non veteranorum aliquis cui decus muralis aut civica, sed Graeculus magister adsistit*).<sup>66</sup> There are sufficient examples of trainers who were not ‘Graeculi’ to suggest that Pliny is guilty of enormous exaggeration,<sup>67</sup> and his complaint taps into a typical Roman prejudice recorded by Plutarch, that Greek gymnasium training engenders effeminacy and is good for athletes as opposed to warriors.<sup>68</sup> All the same, Pliny preserves an ideal that the men ought to be taught in war by veterans with experience and decorations.

Let us consider more closely what sort of exercises the soldiers would have engaged in. One of the most interesting is fieldwork construction or castramentation. This practice was central to Aemilianus’ attempts to prepare his men for the Siege of Numantia:

‘He did not venture to engage the enemy until he had trained his men by many laborious exercises. He traversed all the neighbouring plains, and daily fortified new camps one after another, and then demolished them, dug deep trenches and filled them up again, constructed high walls and overthrew them, personally

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<sup>63</sup> *ILS* 2453.

<sup>64</sup> Southern (2007), 136-7.

<sup>65</sup> Veg. *Mil.* 1.13.

<sup>66</sup> Plin. *Pan.* 13.5.

<sup>67</sup> E.g. *ILS* 2182, 2187.

<sup>68</sup> Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 40.274d; cf. Cic. *Rep.* 4.4.

overlooking the work from morning till night. In order to prevent the men from straggling while on the march, as heretofore, he always moved in the form of squares, and no one was allowed to change the place assigned to him. Moving around the line of march he often visited the rear and caused horsemen to dismount and give their places to the sick, and when the mules were overburdened he made the foot soldiers carry a part of the load. When he had come to the end of the day's march he required those who had formed the vanguard during the day to deploy around the camping place, and a body of horse to scour the country, while the rest performed their allotted tasks, some digging the trench, others building the rampart, and others pitching the tents. He also fixed the time within which these tasks must be finished, and kept an accurate account thereof.'

*οὐ μὴν οὐδ' ὥς ἐτόλμα πολεμεῖν πρὶν αὐτοὺς γυμνάσαι πόνοις πολλοῖς. τὰ οὖν ἀγχοτάτω πεδία πάντα περιῶν, ἐκάστης ἡμέρας, ἄλλο μετ' ἄλλο στρατόπεδον ἤγειρέτε καὶ καθήρει, καὶ τάφρους ὄρυσσε βαθυτάτας καὶ ἐνεπίμπλη, τείχη τε μεγάλα ὠκοδόμει καὶ κατέφευεν, αὐτὸς ἐξ ἡοῦς ἐς ἑσπέραν ἅπαντα ἐφορῶν... εἰ δὲ σταθμεύοι, τοὺς μὲν προφύλακας τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκ τῆς ὁδοιπορίας ἔδει περὶ τὸν χάρακα ἴστασθαι, καὶ ἰππέων ἑτέραν ἴλην περιτρέχειν: οἱ δ' ἄλλοι τὰ ἔργα διήρηντο, καὶ τοῖς μὲν ταφρεύειν ἐτέτακτο, τοῖς δὲ τειχίζειν, τοῖς δὲ σκηνοποιεῖν, χρόνου τε μῆκος ὀρίζετο αὐτοῖς καὶ διεμετρεῖτο.<sup>69</sup>*

This form of training was either heavily emulated or regularised in the Principate, as attested by the practice camps uncovered in Britain, numbering more than fifty.<sup>70</sup> The Pannonian mutineers of 14 AD evidently had more practice at camp construction than they could bear, emphasising it in their complaints to Germanicus: 'they especially mentioned

<sup>69</sup> App. *Iber.* 86 (trans. White).

<sup>70</sup> Davies (1989), 126.

the construction of walls, the fosse, the conveyance of fodder, building-timber, fire-wood, and whatever else had to be procured from necessity, or as a check on idleness in the camp' (*propriis nominibus incusant vallum, fossas, pabuli materiae lignorum adgestus, et si qua alia ex necessitate aut adversus otium castrorum quaeruntur*).<sup>71</sup>

Such practice was necessary in part because the field camp was so crucial to Roman campaigns, and often had to be erected hurriedly or under pressure from the enemy. 'Domitius Corbulo used to say that the pick was the weapon with which to beat the enemy,' reports Frontinus – a quote which attests to the importance of the camp in Roman military thinking, and one need not gaze for long at Trajan's Column to spot a camp under construction.<sup>72</sup> Most of the practice camps in Wales are situated more than a mile away from a fort; having the troops march before encamping would give some simulation of the conditions of campaign.<sup>73</sup>

But in the main, castramentation was probably a form of military labour which formed part of general training and discipline – note Tacitus' use of the phrase *adversus otium* when describing the Pannonian soldiers' repeated camp-building exercises. In the description of Aemilianus' programme, one once again one sees military labour considered an entirely suitable form of preparation for war, with no mention of technical skills: Aemilianus judged the training successful when he judged the army *ὁζὺν καὶ ἐνπειθὲς αὐτῶν καὶ φερέπονον*.<sup>74</sup> Metellus had his men fortify their practice camps with ramparts and ditches, 'just as if the enemy were at hand' (*iuxta ac si hostes adessent*), in his efforts to stamp out idleness.<sup>75</sup>

Drill, parades and manoeuvres seem to have played an increasingly important role

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<sup>71</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 1.35.

<sup>72</sup> Front. *Strat.* 4.7.2: *Domitius Corbulo dolabra hostem vincendum esse dicebat.*

<sup>73</sup> Davies (1989), 132.

<sup>74</sup> App. *Iber.* 87.

<sup>75</sup> Sal. *Jug.* 45.2.

in exercising the legions, under Hadrian in particular. Arrian,<sup>76</sup> Dio,<sup>77</sup> and the *Historia Augusta*<sup>78</sup> emphasise that Hadrian kept the troops in constant training during peacetime, for which one of the most interesting sources is of course the *adlocutio* of Hadrian to the African army at Lambaesis (*ILS* 2487). Hadrian, having witnessed various *exercitationes*, distributes praise for the effectiveness with which these parade-ground manoeuvres were performed. At one point, he claims that both he and Trajan disapproved of witnessing counter-wheeling (*contrari discursus*), suggesting that emperors were by this point highly familiar with a certain repertoire of manoeuvres and had preferences. Many soldiers displayed exceptional feats including weapons skills, much like the cavalryman who, a decade earlier on the Danube, had impressed Hadrian by swimming the river in full kit and splitting one flying arrow with another.<sup>79</sup> Tertullian mentions parade-ground manoeuvres and forming the *testudo*, along with route marches and ditch-digging, as ways soldiers maintained their readiness for warfare in peacetime.<sup>80</sup>

Once these sorts of displays had become a part of army routine, a debate could be had about its merits for fighting efficiency relative to the training-by-experience prized by Republican commanders. The notion that only a taste of real combat can train men for war is at the heart of Fronto's criticisms of Hadrian. Davies has made an eminently reasonable emendation to Fronto, *Principia Historiae* 10: restoring *salicibus* instead of *salibus*, he translates the passage 'The army in the East amused itself under canvas with practice-weapons instead of real swords and shields.'<sup>81</sup> Fronto thus criticises Hadrian for frivolity and pointless exercises unrelated to real war: 'Hadrian's policy was peace and dummy

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<sup>76</sup> Arr. *Tact.* 44.1-2.

<sup>77</sup> Dio 69.5.2, 69.9.3-5.

<sup>78</sup> *SHA Hadrianus* 10.

<sup>79</sup> *ILS* 2558.

<sup>80</sup> Tertullian, *Ad Martyras* 3.

<sup>81</sup> Davies (1989), 79.

weapons; Trajan's war and real ones,' as Davies puts it,<sup>82</sup> and hence Fronto's complaint that *longa desuetudine bellandi miles Romanus ad ignaviam redactus*.<sup>83</sup> Davies proceeds to make the entirely convincing case that Fronto completely misrepresents Hadrian, and the lapse in discipline ought to be attributed to Pius;<sup>84</sup> but one can be more charitable to Fronto than simply to accuse him of misdirection because of his dislike for Hadrian. His notion that the army could not be prepared for battle if it was trained only in camp or on the parade ground would have been shared by many of the great Republican commanders; and one detects also the theme of *metus hostilis*, emphasising that only a real enemy can keep Rome's men fighting-sharp.

Although we might imagine that the fully-professionalised army would include a regular training regime in complete contrast to its Republican predecessor, we in fact see a great degree of continuity in the very lack of regularity. The notion of legionaries drilled into automata – fed partly by anachronistic thinking, and partly by Vegetius' schematised fantasy of the army – stands in contrast to the far less standardised picture of the army, still requiring the same *ad hoc* remedies as it ever did.

Almost every modern description of the Roman army from the mid-Republic onwards includes the phrase 'highly-trained'; perhaps more appropriate would be 'highly-exercised'. To consistently translate *exercitare* as 'train' gives the impression of such exercises as all pertaining strictly to military skills. It is worth quoting in full the following passage of Cicero:

'You may see in the first place whence the very name of an army is derived; and secondly, how great the labour is of an army on its march. Consider that they carry more than a fortnight's provision, and whatever else they may want; that they carry

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<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> Fronto, *Principia Historiae* 11.

<sup>84</sup> Davies (1989), 80.

the burden of the stakes, for as to shield, sword, or helmet, they look on them as no more encumbrance than their own limbs, for they say that arms are the limbs of a soldier, and those indeed they carry so commodiously, that when there is occasion they throw down their burdens, and use their arms as readily as their limbs. Why need I mention the exercises of the legions? And how great the labour is which is undergone in the running, encounters, shouts! Hence it is that their minds are worked up to make so light of wounds in action. Take a soldier of equal bravery, but undisciplined, and he will seem a woman.’

*nostri exercitus primum unde nomen habeant vides, deinde qui labor quantus agminis, ferre plus dimidiati mensis cibaria, ferre si quid ad usum velint, ferre vallum; nam scutum, gladium, galeam in onere nostri milites non plus numerant quam humeros, lacertos, manus; arma enim membra militis esse dicunt; quae quidem ita geruntur apte, ut, si usus ferat, abiectis oneribus, expeditis armis ut membris pugnare possint. Quid? exercitatio legionum, quid? ille cursus, concursus, clamor quanti laboris est! Ex hoc ille animus in proeliis paratus ad vulnera. Adduc pari animo inexercitatum militem, mulier videbitur.*<sup>85</sup>

What does this *inexercitatum militem* lack in comparison to his ‘trained’ counterpart? Reading the passage, one cannot claim that Cicero refers to a lack of technical military skills; rather it is the endurance of toil (*quanti laboris est*, indeed) which has made the veteran *in proeliis paratus ad vulnera*. The Roman soldier was not a mere instrument, for which training provided a set of technical skills to put into practice; rather he was, and was seen as, a fighting man who needed to be maintained in a certain state of mind, prepared for danger and hardened to toil, ready to be fired with *animus* and confident in his own

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<sup>85</sup> Cic. *Tusc.* 2.37-8 (trans. Yonge).

abilities. The inculcation of this military state of mind was the foremost purpose of training, and one imagines Vegetius' statement that *si doctrina cesset armorum, nihil paganus distat a milite* would receive approval among the forbears he so admired.<sup>86</sup>

As we have seen on multiple occasions in this discussion of training, a common trope involved a new commander placed in charge of ill-disciplined troops using hard training to improve them. This is important: it was training, drill, and labour that were used to correct mass lapses in discipline, not punishment in the forms of fines, deprivations, beating, or shaming. Although the imposition of hard labour and austerity may seem like punishments in themselves, the ancient sources never describe them as such – rather, they represent disciplinarian commanders as restoring the proper order of things.

I will deal with straightforward punishments in the rest of this chapter, but it is worth reflecting on the point I have just made in terms of our framework. The emphasis of the sources on drill and labour as the proper correctives to indiscipline, rather than straightforwardly punitive measures, suggests that soldiers were not supposed to be motivated by fear, or that a poorly performing soldiery was one insufficiently afraid of negative consequences. Rather, the restoration of the proper ethos of soldiering – preparing the soldiers to work hard and execute their duties diligently – was what our sources expected a good commander to do. As we shall see below, punishments were certainly available to be used; but what the Romans apparently preferred was to inculcate willing obedience to a shared ethic. In compliance theory terms, we ought to see training and drill not as elements of coercion and intimidation, but as helping to develop normative attachment; drill was mundane and onerous, to be sure, but was not prescribed because of those things. However, army life certainly did include physical punishments, which I shall now examine.

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<sup>86</sup> Veg. *Mil.* 2.23.

## Punishments

The obvious starting point for our discussion is Polybius' excursus on the Roman army in book six, in which numerous punishments are specified. These are as follows: the *fustuarium* (Polybius uses *ζυλοκοπεῖται*) is inflicted on anyone who fails to perform sentry duty, and on *optiones* and prefects who fail to pass on patrol orders properly. Furthermore, thieves, perjurers, anyone punished thrice for the same offence, and passive homosexuals<sup>87</sup> are likewise punished, as are the offences of falsely boasting about battlefield achievements to the tribunes, fleeing from a covering force, and throwing away one's arms.<sup>88</sup> Decimation – the most famous practice from the passage – is presented by Polybius as a convenient way of punishing large bodies of men who flee (presumably the loss of manpower resulting from beating every man who fled would be intolerable).<sup>89</sup>

Overall, Polybius suggests the existence of a very harsh system of punishments sometimes applied for relatively trivial offences. His relatively detached position has been cited in his favour as a reliable witness on these matters, but I think it more likely that this made him susceptible to being impressed by the most extreme aspects of the disciplinary system, particularly those that differed from the Greek tradition, which seems to have lacked corporal punishment.<sup>90</sup>

There has been considerable debate on whether discipline was loosened under the Principate.<sup>91</sup> This has been argued both on the basis of the *Digest*, where 'the regulations generally seem to have lost their uncompromising character to a significant degree',<sup>92</sup> and from various Principate-era statements which refer to decimation and other harsh

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<sup>87</sup> Polybius' wording is unclear: *τις τῶν ἐν ἀκμῇ παραχρησάμενος εὐρεθῆι τῷ σώματι*. See Phang (2001), 282-283.

<sup>88</sup> Polyb. 6.36-7.

<sup>89</sup> Polyb. 6.38.

<sup>90</sup> Kiesling (2006).

<sup>91</sup> Discipline relaxed under the Principate: Speidel (1992b), 24-6; Lee (1996), 203-5; Phang (2008), 111-51. Levels of discipline still high: Parker (1928), 232.

<sup>92</sup> Lee (1996), 204.

punishments as old-fashioned<sup>93</sup> (e.g. Tacitus on Corbulo: *veterem ad morem reduxit*).<sup>94</sup> The key problem with the discussion is that the evidence is insufficient to establish how widespread practices were in any one period, let alone compare across periods – especially considering the imperfect and idealised view which later authors had of earlier periods.<sup>95</sup>

In addition to the idealising tendencies of later sources, I propose that the key reason why Republican discipline seemed more draconian is not so much a product of a changing conception of army discipline (and certainly not of ‘a new wave of humanitarianism’),<sup>96</sup> but rather results from the fact that the armies of the Principate were not campaigning armies most of the time. Crudely speaking, the armies of the Republic were levied for the purpose of fighting and winning wars, where discipline is generally tightened since infractions are potentially costlier. Furthermore, the punishment of cowardly or lazy soldiers was more acceptable to the rest of the army in a situation where derelictions of duty more visibly and severely endangered the entire army.

Watson is probably correct to argue that Corbulo would not have been so remarkable if there had been many other generals like him<sup>97</sup> (and Tacitus himself expresses doubts about just how severe Corbulo was),<sup>98</sup> but we should note also that Corbulo was assigned two commands which required him to quickly whip his armies into shape, in response to imminent threats from the Chauici and then the Parthians. Corbulo implemented combat discipline, appropriate for an army on campaign. Jurists in the *Digest* distinguish between offences committed during peace and during times of war, prescribing harsher punishments for the latter: for instance, Arrius Menander claims that in times of peace, a cavalryman who attempts to desert should be demoted, and a foot soldier forced to

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<sup>93</sup> Watson (1969), 118-9.

<sup>94</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 11.18. See further Ash (2006).

<sup>95</sup> Phang (2008), 113-5.

<sup>96</sup> Watson (1969), 119.

<sup>97</sup> Watson (1969), 119.

<sup>98</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 11.18.

change his branch of service – but in war, these offences would be punishable by death.<sup>99</sup>

This argument explains why Josephus presents an image of a highly regimented and strictly punished army in the imperial era. Josephus claims that ‘they are prepared through fear (*φόβος*), for not only desertion but even minor acts of laziness are punished with death; and the generals are feared even more than the laws’.<sup>100</sup> Later, he has Titus also claim that even minor offences are customarily punished with death, and the emperor comes close to executing a large number of soldiers who had been routed, until their fellow soldiers intercede.<sup>101</sup>

Josephus’s account is often immediately cited in modern descriptions of the Roman army as a force disciplined almost to the point of being automatons, performing obediently and efficiently both on the battlefield and off it. In his account, everyday duties are performed ‘in good order and with regard for security (*μετ’ εὐταξίας ἀνύεται καὶ ἀσφαλείας*)’;<sup>102</sup> in battle, the soldiers’ relentless training and discipline means that ‘neither can any disorder remove them from their usual regularity, nor can fear displace them, nor can labour tire them’.<sup>103</sup> However, Josephus’ descriptions of Roman discipline must be understood in terms of his wider aims in the *Jewish War*. Josephus, who commanded the Jewish forces for a time, consistently contrasts the discipline (using the terms *εὐπείθεια* and *εὐταξία*) of the Roman army with the disorderly nature of the Jewish rebels. He consistently evokes this difference in discipline as the reason for individual fights going the Romans’ way;<sup>104</sup> at one point, the Romans’ *εὐταξία* itself frightens a Jewish force into

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<sup>99</sup> *D.* 49.16.5.1: *Qui in pace deseruit, eques gradu pellendus est, pedes militiam mutat. in bello idem admissum capite puniendum est.*

<sup>100</sup> *Jos. BJ.* 3.103: *οἱ τε γὰρ νόμοι παρ’ αὐτοῖς οὐ λιποταξίου μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ῥαστώνης ὀλίγης θανατικοὶ οἱ τε στρατηγοὶ τῶν νόμων φοβερώτεροι.*

<sup>101</sup> *Jos. BJ.* 5.123-7.

<sup>102</sup> *Jos. BJ.* 3.85.

<sup>103</sup> *Jos. BJ.* 3.74: *οὔτε γὰρ ἀταξία διασκίδνησιν αὐτοὺς ἀπὸ τῆς ἐν ἔθει συντάξεως οὔτε δέος ἐξίστησιν οὔτε δαπανᾷ πόνος.*

<sup>104</sup> E.g. *Jos. BJ.* 3.15, 3.24,

retreat.<sup>105</sup> Josephus attempted to instil the Romans' *εὐπειθεια* into his own men, but presents his efforts as ultimately bound to fail since the Romans had such a head start in experience.<sup>106</sup>

Adding to this Josephus' emulation of Polybius – a theme throughout his work and one which clearly shows in his description of the Roman army's discipline – it should be clear that Josephus' description of an army which was so strictly controlled cannot be taken as genuinely reflective of everyday life in the army when not on campaign. Josephus exaggerated the discipline of the Roman army because, along with internal dissensions among the Jews, it was the key reason he presented for the defeat of his people – and since, as he recognises, his own efforts to institute similar discipline among his own men were bound to fail, the Jewish cause was always doomed. Josephus' own desertion, in that context, becomes a decision with which the reader may have greater sympathy.

Although it is true that harsh punishments are referred to as old-fashioned under the Principate, this does not mean that they were discouraged or illegitimate. The idea that the disciplinarian officers encountered in Tacitus' mutiny narratives are strange exceptions is not necessarily the case: when Watson claims that Aufidienus Rufus, the disciplinarian *praefectus castrorum* punished by the Pannonian mutineers, had an 'out-of-date' attitude, he quotes only Tacitus' claim that he 'restored old-fashioned hard discipline', ignoring his statement that Rufus was sterner (*inmitior*) because he had endured long service in the ranks, suggesting that he too had undergone hard discipline.<sup>107</sup> In fact, *disciplina* here does not refer to beatings or punishments at all: Rufus endured *operis ac laboris* during his time in the ranks, and was punished by being loaded with baggage and forced to march at the head of the column. Nor can the proponent of corporal punishment who earned the

<sup>105</sup> Jos. *BJ*. 2.529: οἱ δὲ στασιασταὶ τὴν εὐταξίαν τῶν Ῥωμαίων καταπλαγέτες τῶν μὲν ἕξω τῆς πόλεως μερῶν εἶκον, εἰς δὲ τὴν ἐνδοτέρω καὶ τὸ ἱερὸν ἀνεχώρουν.

<sup>106</sup> Jos. *BJ*. 2.577.

<sup>107</sup> Watson (1969), 119; Tac. *Ann.* 1.20.

nickname *Cedo alteram* be regarded as an individual exception – when the revolt spread to the German legions, centurions were beaten sixty times each (corresponding to the number of centurions), suggesting that there too, the centurions, ‘the traditional objects of soldierly hatred’, were resented for beating the soldiers.<sup>108</sup>

Another important point is that even during the Principate, levels of discipline fluctuated. Augustus imposed harsh discipline as emperor, keen to display to the ruling classes that he could halt the chaos with which the soldiers had been associated during the civil wars.<sup>109</sup> Tacitus contrasts Nero’s laxness with Galba’s strictness;<sup>110</sup> he then has Otho refer to Galba’s brutality – particularly his decimation of a unit of sailors – when making his own bid for the throne.<sup>111</sup> Once again, the problem of the emperor’s many audiences reappears: on the one hand, the senatorial audience required that the emperor keep the soldiers under control, live up to archaic ideals of severity, and appear – as many emperors attempted – as a ‘new Augustus’, who famously managed the soldiers with a firm hand.<sup>112</sup> On the other hand, maintaining the support and loyalty of the soldiers required that the emperor not condone anything perceived as cruel or savage. As Tacitus often reiterates in the *Histories*, this was a particularly acute concern in times of civil strife.<sup>113</sup>

A useful but complicated source for punishments and discipline in the imperial army is the *Digest*. The section of the *Digest* on military affairs (49.16) consists of excerpts by the early third century Arrius Menander (37 individual rulings), the mid-third century Modestinus (23), the early third century Macer (10), the late second/early third century Paulus (6), the early third century Aelius Marcianus (3), the early third century Ulpian (2), the late second century Tarruntenus Paternus (1), and the late second/early third

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<sup>108</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 1.32.

<sup>109</sup> Campbell (1984), 301.

<sup>110</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 1.5.

<sup>111</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 1.37.

<sup>112</sup> On imitation of the *exemplum Augusti*, see Calomino (2015).

<sup>113</sup> E.g. Tac. *Hist.* 1.51.

century Papinianus (1). These writings are thus the products of a particular period, although they do refer to the rulings of emperors as early as Trajan,<sup>114</sup> and Macer refers to something called the *disciplina Augusti*; this was apparently a code written by Augustus himself, in the first person, or a record of his disciplinary rulings (*nam in disciplina augusti ita cavetur: etsi scio fabrilibus operibus exerceri milites non esse alienum...*).<sup>115</sup> This is likely what the *Senatus Consultum de Cn. Pisone Patre* refers to with the phrase *militarem disciplinam a divo Augusto institutam*.<sup>116</sup>

This *disciplina Augusti* surely formed part of the set of customs, precedents, and statutes which made up the code of military discipline in our period – the *disciplinae militaris sententiae* to which Trajan referred when passing judgement on a centurion who had committed adultery with a military tribune’s wife.<sup>117</sup> The incident reflects well how military law must have been formed in the imperial era: decisions could be referred to emperors, whose judgements would set precedents, but those decisions would be made with reference to existing practices – Trajan added a summary of the rules of military discipline (*commemorationem disciplinae militaris sententiae*) to his ruling, ‘lest all such cases be seen to revert to [his authority]’.

However, we ought not imagine that each offence was punished in strict accordance with a set military law code. Like many aspects of the Roman army, the application of punishments was inconsistent and depended greatly on the particular commander and subordinate commanders. This is made clear both by the literary sources, such as Tacitus’ claim that Corbulo punished first offences in contrast to practices in other armies,<sup>118</sup> and by the juristic writings gathered in the *Digest*. We should expect the jurists

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<sup>114</sup> E.g. 49.16.13.

<sup>115</sup> *D.* 49.16.12.1.

<sup>116</sup> *SCPP* 52.

<sup>117</sup> Plin. *Ep.* 6.31.6.

<sup>118</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 13.35.

in the *Digest*, collating diverse examples and rulings into a body of law, to give a misleadingly regularised picture of how discipline was applied. Yet even this source makes very clear that individual commanders had a great degree of flexibility in making judgements and applying punishments, and could consider a variety of factors to make decisions that were situationally appropriate.

Desertion, one of the major preoccupations of the jurists, provides a good example. Although Tarrumentus Paternus claims that deserters were generally discharged, then tortured and killed<sup>119</sup> (the discharge being both symbolic and legally necessary, since soldiers were exempt from torture),<sup>120</sup> other jurists reveal more nuance. Modestinus suggests that if multiple soldiers deserted together, and returned quickly, their penalty might only be demotion and being sent to serve in different places.<sup>121</sup> He also suggests that new recruits might be treated more leniently, as does Arrius Menander, who urges that the reasons for the soldier's absence be considered – illness or concern for family members might be understandable excuses.<sup>122</sup> A soldier's previous conduct should also be accounted for.<sup>123</sup>

There seems to have been a surprising amount of leniency offered to deserters. In fact, a statement from Paulus, that 'When a soldier, after desertion, has been restored to the army, he shall receive no pay or gifts for the intermediate time, unless the liberality of the emperor permits this as a special favour', suggests that there had even been a suggestion that reinstated deserters might receive pay even for the time during which they were absent!<sup>124</sup> It made sense for there to be a good degree of leniency offered to deserters, in

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<sup>119</sup> *D.* 49.16.7.

<sup>120</sup> *D.* 49.16.3.1.

<sup>121</sup> *D.* 49.16.3.9.

<sup>122</sup> *D.* 49.16.4.15.

<sup>123</sup> *D.* 49.16.5, 49.16.5.6.

<sup>124</sup> *D.* 49.16.10.1: *Sed ex causa desertionis restitutus in militiam non aliter medii temporis stipendium et donativa accipit, nisi hoc liberalitas principalis ei specialiter indulserit.*

order to encourage them to return, and to avoid a loss of manpower and potentially equipment for the army. Just as important, offering deserters a second chance would prevent them from becoming bandits. Arrius Menander suggests that a deserter who commits a crime while away, such as theft, kidnapping, assault, or driving away cattle, should be more severely punished;<sup>125</sup> on the other hand, a deserter who rounded up robbers or other deserters might be spared punishment.<sup>126</sup>

All this does not suggest an institution beholden to an unbending and severe military law, but rather one in which those responsible for discipline were encouraged to make pragmatic and reasonable decisions. Naturally, certain things could hardly be tolerated, such as complete disobedience;<sup>127</sup> but in general, an application of punishment that carefully considered the circumstances of the offence and the perpetrator was eminently more sensible than one of automatic severity – and crucially, could more readily be accepted as fair by the soldiers.

The types of punishments available were varied. Modestinus categorises the types of military punishments as follows: castigation, fines, the imposition of additional duties, transfer to another branch of the service, degradation from rank, and dishonourable discharge, adding that soldiers are exempt from torture or being condemned to the mines.<sup>128</sup> Some of the activities recorded on duty rosters were perhaps assigned by way of punishment (*ad stercus* being a good candidate).<sup>129</sup>

An important point is that many of the punishments were intended to cause shame to disobedient soldiers, just as much as physical harm. Certain punishments, indeed, were entirely designed to shame soldiers in front of their peers, such as when Augustus would

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<sup>125</sup> *D.* 49.16.5.2.

<sup>126</sup> *D.* 49.16.5.8.

<sup>127</sup> *D.* 49.16.3.15, 49.16.6.1-2, 49.16.13.4.

<sup>128</sup> *D.* 49.16.3.1.

<sup>129</sup> *RMR* 9.

order soldiers to stand in front of his tent all day long in ungirt tunics.<sup>130</sup> Corbulo similarly had a cowardly cavalry prefect stripped and ordered to stand at headquarters.<sup>131</sup> He also made cowards camp outside the walls, both publicly shaming them and symbolically exiling them from the military community.<sup>132</sup> Floggings would have been carried out in view of the entire unit, disgracing those who were punished.

In the previous chapter, I suggested the existence of a social divide between ordinary *militēs* and their officers (and prospective officers) – the latter were mainly drawn from a wealthier, more educated background, marked out for *immunis*, *principalis*, or centurion roles, and given tasks which made use of their particular skills, often exempting them from the menial labour of their comrades. One more cause (and a result) of this divide was the centurions' responsibility – and apparent propensity – for inflicting violent punishments. The jurist Macer makes clear that it was the centurions' responsibility to chastise soldiers, and that a soldier who resisted by breaking the centurion's *vitis* or striking him was to be punished with death.<sup>133</sup> Tacitus connects the indiscipline Piso caused in the Syrian legions to his 'removal of the veteran centurions and tougher tribunes'.<sup>134</sup>

When the Pannonian legions mutinied, an agitator by the name of Percennius gave a speech questioning why the men should 'obey like slaves a few centurions and fewer tribunes'.<sup>135</sup> His crowd roared its approval, and 'some angrily displayed the marks of the lash'.<sup>136</sup> Meanwhile, when several companies despatched to Nauportus heard of the revolt, their immediate action was to assail the centurions trying to control them, 'at first with

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<sup>130</sup> Suet. *Aug.* 24.2.

<sup>131</sup> Front. *Strat.* 4.28.

<sup>132</sup> Front. *Strat.* 4.21.

<sup>133</sup> *D.* 49.16.13.4: *Inreverens miles non tantum a tribuno vel centurione, sed etiam a principali coercendus est. nam eum, qui centurioni castigare se volenti restiterit, veteres notaverunt: si vitem tenuit, militiam mutat: si ex industria fregit vel manum centurioni intulit, capite punitur.*

<sup>134</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 2.55.

<sup>135</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 1.17.

<sup>136</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 1.18.

jeers and insults, and finally with blows'.<sup>137</sup> When the mutiny was fully underway, the Pannonian legionaries' wrath turned to the centurions – in particular, one nicknamed *cedo alteram* after his habit of repeatedly asking for new canes when they snapped over the backs of his men.<sup>138</sup> The men of the ninth legion had to intercede to stop the men of the eighth and fifteenth from coming to blows when the fifteenth legion protected a centurion demanded for lynching by the eighth.

In the subsequent revolt among the German legions, Tacitus states that 'claiming relief from their miseries and taking vengeance on the cruelty of their centurions' was a common motivation among soldiers young and old.<sup>139</sup> In his account of what followed, he includes a particularly revealing passage:

*repente lymphati dstrictis gladiis in centuriones invadunt: ea vetustissima militaribus odiis materies et saeviendi principium. prostratos verberibus mulcant, sexageni singulos, ut numerum centurionum adaequarent: tum convulsos laniatosque et partim exanimos ante vallum aut in amnem Rhenum proiciunt. Septimius cum perfugisset ad tribunal pedibusque Caecinae advolveretur, eo usque flagitatus est donec ad exitium dederetur.*<sup>140</sup>

'In a sudden paroxysm of rage the troops rushed with drawn swords on the centurions, the traditional objects of military hatred, and always the first victims of its fury. They threw them to the ground and applied the lash, sixty strokes to a man, one for every centurion in the legion; then tossed them with dislocated limbs, mangled, in some cases unconscious, over the wall or into the waters of the Rhine.

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<sup>137</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 1.20.

<sup>138</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 1.23.

<sup>139</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 1.31: *cuncti modum miseriarum exposcerent saevitiamque centurionum ulciscerentur.*

<sup>140</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 1.32.

Septimius took refuge at the tribunal and threw himself at the feet of Caecina, but was demanded with such insistence that he had to be surrendered to his fate.’

The extraordinary violence inflicted on the centurions, clearly associated with discontent over excessive physical punishments, appears remarkably frenzied and extreme. Tacitus’ claim that the centurions were always the primary subjects of the soldiers’ ire is evidenced many more times in his own and others’ accounts.<sup>141</sup> One of the measures Germanicus took to quell the revolt was to review the roster of centurions; ‘if the tribunes and his legion bore testimony to his energy and integrity, he kept his post; if they agreed in charging him with rapacity or cruelty, he was dismissed.’<sup>142</sup> It is notable that other figures of authority – the legates, Caecina, his property and slaves – were not harmed during the soldiers’ *repens lymphatus*.<sup>143</sup>

Tacitus himself comments on the psychology of Aufidienus Rufus, whom the Pannonian legionaries treated with particular wrath: ‘Rufus, who had long been a common soldier, then a centurion, and subsequently camp-prefect, tried to revive the old severe discipline, inured as he was to work and toil, and all the sterner because he had endured.’<sup>144</sup> Vidich and Stein note a similar propensity for aggression by officers promoted from the ranks in modern militaries, arguing that punishing the ranks of which the officer was formerly a part served as retaliation for previous indignities and restored the ego of the new officer.<sup>145</sup> There may be other explanations, such as a newly promoted officer wishing to show that he is worthy of the role, or dispelling potential perceptions of favouritism towards his former colleagues, or deliberately distancing himself from the ordinary

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<sup>141</sup> E.g. Tac. *Hist.* 1.80; cf. 3.19, 3.31; App. *BC.* 5.2.16; Suet. *Otho.* 1.2

<sup>142</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 1.44.

<sup>143</sup> Brice (2003), 171.

<sup>144</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 1.20: *quippe Rufus diu manipularis, dein centurio, mox castris praefectus, antiquam duramque militiam revocabat, vetus operis ac laboris et eo inimitior quia toleraverat.* One might compare Pliny’s (Ep. 3.14) description of Larcus Macedo, murdered by his slaves: ‘Admittedly he was a cruel and overbearing master, too ready to forget that his father had been a slave, or perhaps too keenly conscious of it’.

<sup>145</sup> Vidich and Stein (1960), 501.

soldiers in order to assimilate with the officer class. Nonetheless, it is interesting to see Tacitus identify a cycle of violence, with those who endured becoming perpetrators precisely because of this experience. As in the mutinies described by Tacitus, this sometimes resulted in reprisals against officers.<sup>146</sup>

### Conclusion

It is undeniable that corporal punishment and execution were employed by the Roman army in both the Republic and the Principate, and that contemporaries believed that threats were useful for motivating Roman soldiers. It may well be the case that this gave the Romans an advantage over their enemies: Polybius comments explicitly on the motivational effects of punishments, claiming that night watches were well-kept owing to the severity of potential punishments,<sup>147</sup> and fear of individual or collective punishment prevented flight in battle,<sup>148</sup> while Josephus makes mention of a group of soldiers motivated to stand and fight to the death against the Jews because of the *δεινὸς νόμος* by which fleeing soldiers are put to death.<sup>149</sup>

However, despite modern fascination, it is rarely acknowledged that our evidence for punishments in the army is very slight, as well as problematic. What little we do have suggests that the army was not beaten and threatened into obedience. Indeed, for Josephus, the harshness of punishments was notable, but not a key explanation for Roman military success, and describing how he remodelled his Jewish force on the Roman army in the hopes of defeating them, he makes no mention of instituting harsh punishments. This was despite the fact that he thought the Jewish rebels had a distinct disciplinary problem,

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<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 309-13.

<sup>147</sup> Polyb. 6.37.6.

<sup>148</sup> Polyb. 6.37.12, 6.38.4.

<sup>149</sup> Jos. *BJ*. 5.482-3.

indulging in theft, robbery, and rapine; nevertheless, to attain the *εὐπειθεία* and *μελέτη τῶν ὀπλῶν* which he diagnosed as the key ingredients of Roman success, he mainly focused on organisational reforms, tactical drills, and moral instruction.<sup>150</sup> Undeniably, life in the Roman army was brutal – just as was life in the rest of Roman society<sup>151</sup> – but the soldiers were not cowed into fearful submission by an inflexible system of rules and punishments. Xenophon’s description of Clearchus, who ‘punished on principle, for he believed there was no good in an army that went without punishment’, would not be one that generally fit the army of the Roman Principate.<sup>152</sup>

Instead, major punishments in the Roman army ought to be seen as exceptional measures in response to particular breaches of discipline rather than the foundation of obedience; they were resorted to when other means of motivation failed. Drill and training were not intended to cow a legionary into submission, but to instil a willingness to follow the army’s demands and buy into their units – consider the practice camps at Llandridnod Common and Dolldinas, where Davies has suggested that the evidence indicates *centuriae* competing against one another.<sup>153</sup>

It is worth considering the connections between punishments and other parts of the compliance theory framework. Although Polybius<sup>154</sup> and Modestinus<sup>155</sup> do affirm that fines were used as punishments, we lack any specific examples or indications that this was a widespread practice. Of course, this may be explained by the fact that such low-level punishments for relatively inconspicuous offences naturally escaped the attention of our literary and juridical sources. Nonetheless, our evidence suggests that just as Roman

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<sup>150</sup> Jos. *BJ.* 2.577-82.

<sup>151</sup> See e.g. Saller (1994), ch. 6: ‘In reading about the instruments of corporal punishment that were part of a Roman’s ordinary experience - spiked whips, clubs, racks, hot irons – a modern is likely to react initially with revulsion. Romans regularly and *legitimately* inflicted on their fellow men corporal punishments that maimed and even killed’ (p. 134).

<sup>152</sup> Xen. *Anab.* 2.6.10: *καὶ γνώμη δ’ ἐκόλαζεν: ἀκολάστου γὰρ στρατεύματος οὐδὲν ἠγεῖτο ὄφελος εἶναι.*

<sup>153</sup> Davies (1989), 136.

<sup>154</sup> Polyb. 6.37.

<sup>155</sup> *D.* 49.16.3.1.

soldiers were not incentivised with remunerative rewards for specific actions, they were not commonly threatened with financial penalties.

The notion of *disciplina Augusti*, directly tying matters of soldierly obedience to the figure of the emperor, constitutes an important part of the paternal relationship which the emperor forged with the soldiers, his power to punish resembling that of a *pater familias* (even if it was just as theoretical). In the same way that the emperor was emphasised as the source of all pay and rewards, thus limiting the capacity of generals to dispense rewards, his position as the font of discipline may have discouraged local commanders from exercising much initiative in enacting punishments. This is hinted at by Macer's statement that a commander's duties include 'punishing offences within the limits of his authority' (*delicta secundum suae auctoritatis modum castigare*).<sup>156</sup>

Wesbrook notes in his application of compliance patterns to military forces that 'Even though organizations employ elements of all three patterns, most rely predominantly on one pattern,' and suggests that the three potential compliance structures are mutually exclusive.<sup>157</sup> Yet the Roman army, throughout its history, manifests strong elements of all three compliance relationships, and in combination. Josephus, for instance, claims that the severe punishments inflicted by commanders were balanced by the generous rewards they gave to brave soldiers.<sup>158</sup> The use of coercive methods and punishments need not create an 'alienated' individual, if that individual accepts the system of punishments to be just. For shaming punishments to have been effective required some investment in the social and cultural world of the legion. For the other soldiers who watched on, seeing those who violated military values being publicly humiliated or beaten would impress upon them that

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<sup>156</sup> *D.* 49.16.12.2.

<sup>157</sup> Wesbrook (1980), 248.

<sup>158</sup> *Jos. BJ.* 3.103.

those who stepped out of line were unworthy. This brings us neatly to the final part of the framework, which focuses on normative motivation.

## Chapter 6: Soldiers and Civilians

This and the following two chapters engage with some key debates in Roman military studies: first, the extent to which Roman armies were ‘closed societies’, beholden to a unique military culture (the subject of the present chapter); second, the notion that military units ought to be considered along with an ‘extended community’ (the subject of the next chapter); and finally, how the practise of detachment affected these communities (the final chapter). These chapters serve two purposes: first, by considering the social contexts of legionary service in greater detail, these chapters complicate and deepen the discussions conducted in previous chapters. Furthermore, they provide extended opportunities to explore the final component of the combat motivation framework, the moral/normative relationship. Fundamentally, this relationship deals with many of the same issues which have presented themselves in the preceding chapters: social connections, the conditions of everyday life, and the legionary’s incorporation of the military into his essential sense of identity. Examining the social world of the legionary requires that we establish its limits, and explore the pressures that directed soldiers to seek identity and comradeship within the military.

So far, this thesis has examined the legionary’s relations with his fellow soldiers and the wider military community. We turn now to soldiers’ interactions with the civilian population more broadly. This is a huge topic on which scholarly opinions vary considerably, and one could write a dozen theses on this subject alone. As such, I should precisely define my intentions for this chapter: I shall not be discussing provincial administration or imperial policy; rather, in keeping with the aims and themes of this thesis, I shall explore social interactions between ordinary legionaries and civilians, and whether military communities were socially isolated from surrounding populations.

The notion that the army was a ‘closed society’ has been central to most

scholarship on life in the legions: in discussing the legion as a society, MacMullen characterised the legion as ‘rather sealed off from the ordinary, that is, from the civilian’.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the most extreme position in this vein was articulated by Brent Shaw, arguing that *legio III Augusta* in Numidia was a ‘total institution’,<sup>2</sup> borrowing a concept from the sociologist Erving Goffman’s work on asylums.<sup>3</sup> According to Shaw, ‘the legion itself encompass[ed] the men totally in their habits’, and was an ‘isolated and in-bred’ institution with its loyalty directed entirely towards the emperor. The ‘acid test’ of the soldiers’ loyalties came in AD 238, when the soldiers brutally suppressed the Gordianus revolt, siding with the emperor Maximinus ‘entirely regardless of their nominal derivation from African society’. The issues of soldier-civilian relations, institutional insularity, and military identity have thus been intertwined in the historiography, and in exploring the topic we confront a crucially important issue for a social history of the Roman army.

The first sustained treatment of the question of soldier-civilian relations was Ramsay MacMullen’s *Soldier and Civilian in the Later Roman Empire* – not a work strictly concerned with relations between the two groups, rather an attempt to demonstrate an increasing interpenetration of the military and civilian spheres in the late empire: ‘Civilian turned soldier, soldier turned civilian, in a rapprochement to a middle ground of waste and confusion’.<sup>4</sup> Nonetheless, MacMullen had cause to explore the army’s relations with civilians, concluding that the army was a ‘mixed blessing’: soldiers’ notoriety and penchant for abuse needed to be set against the economic stimulation which the presence of army units could provide.<sup>5</sup>

In 1983, Brent Shaw wrote an extensive review of Elizabeth Fentress’ *Numidia and*

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<sup>1</sup> MacMullen (1984), 441.

<sup>2</sup> Shaw (1983), esp. 144-9.

<sup>3</sup> Goffman (1961).

<sup>4</sup> MacMullen (1963), 152.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 77-98.

*the Roman Army*, in which Shaw argued for the complete social isolation of *legio III Augusta* in Numidia.<sup>6</sup> He emphasised both the foreignness of the soldiers, which ‘fuelled a terrible estrangement between the body of the soldiery and the local populace’, and the internal institutions of the army, which focused the legionary’s loyalties entirely toward the army itself. Nigel Pollard found the ‘total institution’ notion a useful one when examining the army in Syria, though he did not accept such an extreme view in its entirety.<sup>7</sup> Soldier-civilian relations also constituted a key theme of Benjamin Isaac’s *The limits of empire*, in which Isaac characterised the situation in Judaea as ‘a reality of intensive army interference which takes brutality as a matter of course’.<sup>8</sup> The violence inherent to imperial domination has been stressed in recent works influenced by postcolonial approaches, such as David Mattingly’s *Imperialism, Power, and Identity*.<sup>9</sup>

The most notable opponent of this negative view of soldier-civilian relations has been Richard Alston, who instead argues that (at least in Egypt) ‘The deep involvement of the soldiery in civilian society and the level of integration demonstrated by the soldiery demand an absence of real hostility between the groups.’<sup>10</sup> Although he does not engage with Shaw or his use of the ‘total institution’ concept, Alston’s argument – that the considerable involvement of soldiers in civilian society suggests a lack of hostility – shows how central the supposed isolation of the military community has become to the debate on civilian-military relations. Alston’s views have sometimes been exaggerated (Bagnall’s review of Alston’s book was titled *A kinder, gentler Roman army?*),<sup>11</sup> and Alston never denied that abuses occurred (‘it is extremely probable that there was regularly some

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<sup>6</sup> Shaw (1983), esp. 143-8.

<sup>7</sup> Pollard (1996).

<sup>8</sup> Isaac (1992), 117.

<sup>9</sup> Mattingly (2011).

<sup>10</sup> Alston (1995), 101.

<sup>11</sup> Bagnall (1997).

friction in the relationship’).<sup>12</sup> Nor has Alston denied the existence of a distinct military identity.<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, as one of a very limited number of scholars to argue for integration rather than separation, and ties of friendship rather than mutual distrust, Alston’s name is the one most often associated with a more positive vision of the Roman army’s presence in provincial life.

Most scholars find themselves somewhere between the extreme positions of hostility and amicableness. The notion of a ‘total institution’ was always too rigid, supposing an unfeasible level of isolation. Isaac’s bleak picture of soldier-civilian relations in Judaea – a go-to citation for any historian wishing to illustrate soldiers’ potential for abuse – concerns an area which, by virtue of the available sources, provides the greatest quantity of evidence for abuse, but which may also have been an exceptionally restless area where tensions were unusually high.<sup>14</sup> Likewise, there are problems with Alston’s more positive view. As Haynes has pointed out, the employment of soldiers in civilian contexts does not necessarily entail extensive socialising;<sup>15</sup> in fact, as I shall argue, the nature of soldiers’ tasks further alienated them from local populations. Furthermore, much of Alston’s evidence relates to settled veterans rather than serving soldiers.<sup>16</sup> True, veteran settlement patterns have been used as evidence for continued self-imposed separation and isolation by military personnel,<sup>17</sup> but the question of whether the army as an institution, and the soldiers’ experiences of service, were isolated is a separate issue. (Not that veterans were always well-integrated: Adams notes examples of veterans being beaten or having their privileges ignored.<sup>18</sup>)

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<sup>12</sup> Alston (1995), 70.

<sup>13</sup> Alston (1999), 178.

<sup>14</sup> This is sometimes presented as a criticism of Isaac, but was entirely acknowledged by Isaac (1992, 421).

<sup>15</sup> Haynes (1999), 11.

<sup>16</sup> E.g. Alston (1995), ch. 7, showing veteran integration into the population of Karanis.

<sup>17</sup> E.g. MacMullen (1984), 441-3.

<sup>18</sup> Adams (2013), 265-6, citing *SB* XII 11, 114; *SB* V 7523; *BGU* I 180.

As for Alston's argument for socialising and friendship based on the letters of a number of soldiers in Egypt, he himself notes the methodological difficulties with this approach: only a subset of social relations are represented, and the recipients of letters were perhaps more distant and therefore less significant social relations; only the literate and well-connected are represented (and as argued in chapter 4, this was probably a minority of soldiers); and many of the letters relate to business transactions rather than social interactions.<sup>19</sup> A larger problem is that most of the letters come from veterans rather than serving soldiers, who would naturally have to interact with the civilians around them. In any case, we should expect examples of friendship and fraternisation just as we should expect abuse; absent any statistics, these examples can make little contribution to our judgement of the overall situation.

The prevailing stereotype of soldiers in literature was extremely negative – from *militēs* to centurions, military personnel were expected to be brash and aggressive, engaging in cynical extortion and wanton violence. In the *Golden Ass*, a Greek-speaking gardener fails to understand the questions in Latin of a passing soldier and does not respond. The soldier, 'unable to restrain his natural arrogance', immediately strikes him with his *vitis*, so hard that blood flows from the gardener's head.<sup>20</sup> Repeating his request in Greek, the soldier seizes the ass on the pretext that the governor requires it – and the gardener's protests only enrage the soldier further still, so that he reverses his *vitis* to strike him in the head with the thick end.<sup>21</sup> The gardener, who manages to beat up the soldier and escape, is nevertheless later tracked down by the soldier and his friends, who do not need to supply any evidence to convince the local magistrates to find and execute him.<sup>22</sup> The

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<sup>19</sup> Alston (1999), 179.

<sup>20</sup> Apul. *Met.* 9.39: *Nec miles ille familiarem cohibere quivit insolentiam, sed indignatus silentio eius ut convicio, viti quam tenebat obtundens eum dorso meo proturbat.*

<sup>21</sup> Apul. *Met.* 9.39-40.

<sup>22</sup> Apul. *Met.* 9.41-2.

gardener would have been better off taking the advice of Epictetus, who warned not to resist when soldiers requisition your ass, lest you supplement your loss with a beating.<sup>23</sup>

As Campbell notes, the fictional incidents in the works of Apuleius and Petronius surely draw on recognisable details from contemporary life to make them more entertaining and comprehensible.<sup>24</sup> They contain a view of soldiers consonant with that found in Juvenal, whose sixteenth satire, on the privileges of the army, complains bitterly that soldiers can beat civilians with impunity; for if the civilian seeks redress for his ‘knocked-out teeth, or face swollen black and blue, or one remaining eye which the doctor cannot promise to save’, he will undergo trial in a military camp, with a centurion for a judge, and will inevitably fail in his suit; whereupon the other soldiers will give him a beating even more severe than the initial offence.<sup>25</sup>

How far this stereotype of the soldier as a perpetrator of wanton violence is true is difficult to judge, especially as the literary evidence was produced by a class fundamentally hostile to the soldiery.<sup>26</sup> However, a number of edicts demonstrate the existence of a sufficiently widespread problem to attract attention from governors and emperors.<sup>27</sup> These mostly concern illegal requisitions, such as an edict of Mamertinus, prefect of Egypt, which claims that the army has acquired a reputation among the locals for *πλεονεξία καὶ ἀδικία* as a result of its unlawful seizures of boats, animals and men; and the attribution of responsibility only to *πολλοὺς τῶν στρατιωτῶν* indicates that these were incidents of soldierly misconduct as opposed to the use of soldiers by abusive provincial officials.<sup>28</sup> The jurist Ulpian tasked provincial governors with ensuring that ‘persons of limited resources are not treated unjustly by having their only lamp or small supply of

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<sup>23</sup> 4.1.79.

<sup>24</sup> Campbell (1984), 245.

<sup>25</sup> Juv. 5.16.1-34.

<sup>26</sup> Alston (1995), 54.

<sup>27</sup> Mitchell (1976); Campbell (1984), 248-53.

<sup>28</sup> *Select Papyri* II, 221.

furniture taken from them for the use of others, under the pretext of the arrival of officers or soldiers’, and that ‘things are not commandeered in the name of the military which are not of use to the whole soldiery, but which some crookedly claim to their own advantage.’<sup>29</sup>

That there were widespread problems is undeniable. Quantifying abuse, demonstrating integration or positive interactions, and investigating the isolation of military communities are more difficult matters. Overall, the sum of the evidence does seem to point to a very negative picture, but as Fagan has argued, the surviving source material grants only impressions, from which generalisations can be drawn only with great uncertainty.<sup>30</sup> Grave abuses are far more likely to be recorded than affirmations that things were more or less fine. Totting up such examples will not get us very far; rather, I shall consider the issue more systematically, discussing patterns in the evidence and how fundamental aspects of the army’s organisation created such patterns.

A welcome development in studies of the Roman provinces has been to attend to the experiences and perspectives of civilians (sometimes referred to as ‘natives’ or ‘locals’) in contact with the Roman army.<sup>31</sup> By focusing on the soldiers (the subjects of this thesis), I am not ignoring this development or denying its importance, and indeed the issue of isolation goes both ways – to the extent that soldiers were isolated from civilians, civilians would be alienated from soldiers. In fact, if we consider the Roman elite and the Roman army as ‘two rival power structures’ with often divergent interests and mutual suspicions,<sup>32</sup> the notion of a binary opposition between soldiers as state representatives and

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<sup>29</sup> *D. 1.18.6.5: Ne tenuis vitae homines sub praetextu adventus officiorum vel militum, lumine unico vel brevi suppellectili ad aliorum usus translatis, iniuriis vexentur, praeses provinciae providebit; D. 1.18.6.6: Ne quid sub nomine militum, quod ad utilitates eorum in commune non pertinet, a quibusdam propria sibi commoda inique vindicantibus committatur, praeses provinciae provideat.*

<sup>30</sup> Fagan (2011b).

<sup>31</sup> E.g. Isaac (1992).

<sup>32</sup> Alston (1999), 191.

agents of imperialism on the one hand, and dominated civilians on the other looks a little more complex.

A well-known development in ancient historical studies in recent times has been the ‘spatial turn’, emphasising the importance of considering spatial contexts. This approach was applied to violence in a 2016 volume edited Werner Riess and Garrett Fagan, *The Topography of Violence in the Greco-Roman World*, in which the contributors explored specifically violent acts with relation to space and place. We too can learn much about the nature of soldierly abuses by examining the contexts in which they occurred.

It is often assumed that abuses resulted from the close proximity of civilians to military installations, especially in cities. Isaac, for example, argues that tensions between soldiers and civilians were uniquely heightened in the east, where military units were permanently stationed in cities, whereas in the west, a lack of urbanisation meant that military installations were not located so close to civilian centres.<sup>33</sup> However, in our sources, abuse seems to have been associated more with the country and routes between urbanised centres than with urbanised centres themselves. Apuleius’ farmer, for instance, is accosted while travelling to market on a road in Greece.<sup>34</sup> When Juvenal mentions the foolishness of seeking justice for abuses by soldiers, he asks who would dare to travel so far from the city to reach the military camp (*quis tam procul adsit ab urbe*), presenting the military base as a space apart from the city and from regular justice.<sup>35</sup> Edicts dealing with abuse also specify that problems occur outside of cities: the edict of Mamertinus mentions soldiers committing abuses ‘while travelling through the country’ (*διὰ τῆς χώρας πορευομένου*);<sup>36</sup> an edict concerning the city of Euhippe in Caria blames ‘soldiers and functionaries who have left the royal roads and highways’ (*ἐκτρεπομένων τὰς βασιλικὰς*

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<sup>33</sup> Isaac (1992), 269-310.

<sup>34</sup> Apul. *Met.* 9.39.

<sup>35</sup> Juv. 5.16.25.

<sup>36</sup> *Sel. Pap.* II 221, line 4.

καὶ λεωφόρους ὁδοὺς στρατιωτῶν τε καὶ ὀφιλιολίῳν);<sup>37</sup> similarly, in a petition from an estate in Phrygia from AD 246, the inhabitants, who ‘live in the middle of a rural area’, complain that they are being harassed by soldiers ‘on their travels through the territory of the Appians, leaving the main roads’ (διοδεύοντες γὰρ τὸ Ἀππιανῶν κλίμα παραλιμπάνοντες τὰς λεωφόρους ὁδοὺς).<sup>38</sup> The most famous petition concerning military abuse – the Skaptopara inscription – came from a remote village situated between two military camps,<sup>39</sup> while an edict of AD 42 forbade soldiers from exacting supplies or service from inhabitants of the countryside (τοὺς ἐπὶ τῆς χώρας).<sup>40</sup> Columella advised against building upon land with an adjoining military highway, warning against the resulting ‘depredations of passing travellers and the constant entertainment of those who turn in for lodging’.<sup>41</sup>

Why should this be so? The first reason is the detachment system, which I examine in detail in chapter 8. The extensive practice of detachment meant that large numbers of legionaries were constantly moving within and between provinces, putting soldiers on the roads, or in fortlets and other small installations throughout the landscape. Often, these men lacked officers to supervise them – *curatores* (the term used on ostraca for detachment commanders) could be relatively lowly, in one case a *signifer*, while *I.Pan.* 51 refers to a *curator* simply as a man ‘of the century of Bassus’ rather than by rank, perhaps indicating an ordinary *miles*.<sup>42</sup> Cuvigny likewise suggests that *O.Krok.* 87 shows the *curator* of Thonis Megale to have been ‘un simple cavalier, ἵππευς’.<sup>43</sup> For small patrols or travelling soldiers, there need not have been any sort of commander. Whereas soldiers in cities could be restricted to a military quarter and were under constant supervision by

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<sup>37</sup> C.R.A.I. 1952, 589f.

<sup>38</sup> *OGIS* 519.

<sup>39</sup> *SEG* 44.610, lines 21-26.

<sup>40</sup> Smallwood I, no. 381.

<sup>41</sup> Columella, *Rust.* 1.5.6-7.

<sup>42</sup> Symonds (2018), 20-1.

<sup>43</sup> Cuvigny (2003a), 314-5.

superiors, those on the move were in many ways released from military discipline.

Detached soldiers are specifically blamed in the Skaptopora inscription: ‘soldiers dispatched elsewhere leave their proper routes (*στρατιῶται ἀλλαχοῦ πεμπόμενοι καταλιμπάνοντες τὰς ἰδίας ὁδοὺς*), and appear before us and force us to provide them with hospitality and provisions, paying nothing whatsoever.’<sup>44</sup> Pliny wrote to Trajan to ask that a centurion be sent to safeguard the town of Juliopolis, ‘for the city lies at the extremity of Bithynia, and through it the large number of persons who travel through the province have to pass’; these travellers were placing ‘heavy burdens’ on the town.<sup>45</sup> Tellingly, in Trajan’s reply, the emperor automatically assumes that some of the offenders had been soldiers – he instructs that the commanding officers of any misbehaving soldiers be informed, despite Pliny not mentioning military personnel in his own letter.<sup>46</sup>

Another key problem caused by soldiers on the move was due to the need for lodging – presumably this was among the ‘heavy burdens’ placed on Juliopolis. An inscription dating to AD 185/6 from Phaena, a village in southern Syria, records a letter from the legate of Syria, ordering that since the village has a lodging house (*ξενῶνα*), the townspeople cannot be forced to lodge strangers in their own homes.<sup>47</sup> Clearly there had previously been issues with soldiers demanding lodging in private houses, since the legate promises to provide satisfaction to anyone made to provide lodging by force (*βίαιως*) to either a soldier or private individual. The legate instructs the villagers to display his letter in a public place, ‘lest anyone excuse themselves through ignorance’.

Since the letter explains that the *ξενῶνα* excuses the villagers from having to make private accommodation available, it may be that soldiers would otherwise have a right to

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<sup>44</sup> *AE* 1994, 1552.

<sup>45</sup> *Plin. Ep.* 10.77.

<sup>46</sup> *Plin. Ep.* 10.78. In this case, the emperor thought the town of Juliopolis too insignificant to be supplied with a legionary centurion as at Byzantium.

<sup>47</sup> *OGIS* 609.

accommodation. An inscription from Pisidia during the reign of Tiberius does order that lodgings (*mansio*) should be provided without payment for military personnel from every province,<sup>48</sup> as does the edict of Vergilius Capito, prefect of Egypt in AD 48 (using the term ‘shelter’ – *στέγη*).<sup>49</sup> A Domitianic inscription from Epiphania, on the other hand, requires explicit imperial permission – a rule which had been put in place by Vespasian.<sup>50</sup> On this evidence, then, it seems that only under Vespasian was it realised that soldiers might not be trusted to demand lodging only when strictly necessary. In any case, Domitian had to reiterate what his father had already ordered, as abuses had since occurred as the result of ‘deliberate neglect’. This is one obvious problem with edicts prohibiting abuse: condemnation was easy to proclaim, but enforcement required the will of administrators and officers. Further, the inscription suggests that these protections were part of the ‘privileges of the cities’ (*τὰ τῶν πόλεων φιλόνηθροπα*), and indeed the notion that the emperor *could* grant permission to requisition property implies that freedom from seizure was far from an expectation for imperial subjects. If civilians outside of urban centres were required to help facilitate the movements of detached soldiers, this is a key reason why abuse would occur more frequently beyond city limits.

Besides accommodation, soldiers on the move could also require and requisition supplies and transport – another area in which their rights were problematically ill-defined.<sup>51</sup> The requisition of animals was part of the regular exercise of state power: using property declarations and censuses, village scribes would produce lists of individuals liable to provide animals for requisition.<sup>52</sup> Problems arose when individuals or small groups of

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<sup>48</sup> Mitchell (1976).

<sup>49</sup> Smallwood I, no. 382. Lewis (1954) argues that this particular edict concerns not soldiers’ abuses of civilians, but the improper expenditure of travel funds; nonetheless, for the purposes of this point the edict states unambiguously that shelter was one thing that travelling soldiers were entitled to demand.

<sup>50</sup> *I GLS* V, 1998.

<sup>51</sup> On abuses of the requisition system, see Mitchell (1976) and Adams (2007), 138-42.

<sup>52</sup> Adams (2007), 138.

detached soldiers made demands under the pretext of military necessity, or did not recompense civilians. We have seen such illicit requisitions mentioned in Juvenal, Epictetus, and Apuleius; they are also mentioned in the edict of Aemilius Rectus (AD 42, condemning the seizure of supplies and impressment of civilians);<sup>53</sup> the edict of Vergilius Capito (AD 48, concerning the seizure of transport);<sup>54</sup> and the edict of Mamertinus (AD 133-137, condemning seizures of boats, beasts, and men).<sup>55</sup> This type of requisition is also mentioned in a number of edicts which do not specify military personnel, such as an edict of Germanicus from AD 19, in which Germanicus condemns seizures of boats, animals, and billets in connection with his visit.<sup>56</sup>

If we consider Ulpian's advice cited above – that governors should ensure 'things are not commandeered in the name of the military which are not of use to the whole soldiery, but which some crookedly claim to their own advantage'<sup>57</sup> – a key problem comes into focus: how could it possibly be ascertained whether requisitioning had taken place because of genuine military need or personal avarice? At the moment of seizure, what civilian would demand proof? Only a fool, like the individuals beaten up in Juvenal and in Apuleius, whose donkey was seized by a soldier who claimed that it was needed to carry the governor's baggage, when in fact it was sold for eleven denarii.<sup>58</sup>

A subsequent appeal would be more sensible, but unlikely to deliver restitution, as shown by the very fact that most of the edicts on restitution had to restate existing rules which had been ineffectually enforced.<sup>59</sup> The Skaptopara inscription provides a good example – the villagers claim that they 'have often appealed to the governors of Thrace,

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<sup>53</sup> *P. Lond.* III, 1171.

<sup>54</sup> Lewis (1954), 154.

<sup>55</sup> *Select Papyri* II, 221.

<sup>56</sup> *Select Papyri* II, 211.

<sup>57</sup> *D.* 1.18.6.5-6.

<sup>58</sup> *Apul. Met.* 10.13.

<sup>59</sup> Adams (2007), 140.

who, following your divine regulations, have commanded that we should remain unmolested'; later they state that the governors' orders were effective for a time, but that the problem has resurfaced.<sup>60</sup> This appeal, organised collectively as a village and delivered to the emperor by a resident of the village who happened to be a soldier,<sup>61</sup> was among the more likely to receive some attention. On the other hand, an individual of low social standing and little means could well suffer more than they gained through an appeal. Attracting the attention of someone in power would be difficult in the first place – not least because, as Peachin argues, there appears to have been no clearly defined system of appeal or delegation of responsibilities in such matters.<sup>62</sup> This can be seen in one of the most famous examples of abuse, *T. Vindol.* II 344, a petition for redress from a trader at Vindolanda who had been beaten and had his goods thrown away. The petitioner says that he had first attempted to contact the prefect, then a *beneficarius*,<sup>63</sup> then various centurions, before this letter to the provincial governor, illustrating both the lack of a clear system for receiving petitioners and the difficulty of finding anyone interested in taking such a case.

Even if one were to go and put forward a case against a soldier, they would encounter the problems in obtaining justice from the military enumerated in Juvenal's sixteenth satire. One would have to enter the hostile environment of the military camp and be judged according to military law by a centurion, and even if one were stubborn and stupid enough to do this, the chances of finding a friend or witness to testify would be slight – 'sooner will you find a false witness against a civilian than one who will tell the truth against the interest and the honour of a soldier.'<sup>64</sup> Juvenal stresses the atmosphere of

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<sup>60</sup> *AE* 1994, 1552.

<sup>61</sup> Lines 6-7.

<sup>62</sup> Peachin (1999), 232-5.

<sup>63</sup> Peachin (1999), 230 n. 25 discusses whether this means a *beneficarius praefecti*, or a locally stationed *beneficarius*.

<sup>64</sup> *Juv.* 16.32-4: *citius falsum producere testem contra paganum possis quam uera loquentem contra fortunam armati contraque pudorem.*

physical intimidation, claiming that the other soldiers will give the claimant a beating far worse than the original offence.<sup>65</sup> The collusion among members of the military to protect one another recalls the soldier in Apuleius, having tried and failed to rob the farmer, finding a group of *commilitones* to assist him – they endeavour to find the farmer, are tipped off by a perfidious neighbour, and summon the magistrates to arrest him after falsely claiming that he had stolen a silver jug from them on the road. In these few chapters, soldiers are portrayed as violent, opportunistic, and greedy, as well as being fluent liars, never far from military comrades to assist them, and inevitably granted a favourable ear by the magistrates. The petitioner in *T. Vindol.* II 344, rebuffed by numerous military officials in his search for justice, also seems to have come up against an institution closing ranks against him.

With every type of abuse or situation which might facilitate abuse mentioned in this chapter, the difficulty of appealing for restitution to an automatically hostile ruling power should be borne in mind. Of course, too much abuse could lead to resistance and rebellion, so authorities did not simply allow soldiers to get away with anything – the edicts mentioned above attest to this (even if they were mostly ineffective), and the soldiers in Apuleius do have to concoct a lie about the farmer being a thief to get the magistrates on their side. This is why most complaints about military abuse concern requisition: ‘military necessity’ provided enough of a rationale for soldiers to explain away their actions, either at the point of requisition or when called to account.

Roads and other relatively isolated areas were common sites of military abuse for the same reasons that they were frequently threatened by bandits – with nobody around either to help or to witness the act, those who could get their way by force and feel confident that they would not face consequences often did so. It is unsurprising, then, that

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<sup>65</sup> Juv. 16.20-22.

soldiers were compared to bandits: according to Isaac, Talmudic sources regularly refer to soldiers as bandits (*listim*),<sup>66</sup> while Fuhrmann argues that the bandits in Apuleius, who use ‘over-the-top military language’ and act as if they were soldiers, were intended to remind readers of soldiers, drawing an equivalence between the two groups and critiquing the soldiery.<sup>67</sup> An important implication of this is that we should expect plenty of abuse in the less urbanised west as well as in the urbanised east; although most of the evidence comes from the east (since this is where most of our written sources survive), our observation that abuse was more commonly associated with soldiers moving through the landscape than soldiers living in close proximity to civilians means that the lack of cities in the west did not make abuse any less likely (contra Isaac).

Besides the spatial contexts for soldier-civilian interactions, it is also important to bear in mind the roles that soldiers typically performed which brought them into contact with civilians. Arguably, most of these roles by their very nature would lead to tense and hostile interactions. In saying this, I disagree with Alston’s argument that the very presence and involvement of soldiers in civilian life meant positive integration:

‘Soldiers and veterans were in continual contact with civilian Egyptians. Soldiers worked with Egyptian civilians in manning the extensive security system of the province. They supervised the collection of taxes. They worked with local police in the nomes. They traded with civilians and probably received many supplies from civilian contractors. They married and the resultant children lived in Graeco-Egyptian settlements. There was no great cultural, social or economic division and it is unsurprising, viewed from this level, that the soldiers integrated.’<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Isaac (1992), 82.

<sup>67</sup> Fuhrmann (2011), 236-7.

<sup>68</sup> Alston (1995), 159.

On the contrary, I believe that most of the tasks which soldiers undertook while in contact with civilians were far more likely to result in animosity. To be clear, I am not concerned with military involvement in civilian affairs on an institutional level, but rather with the presence of ordinary soldiers among civilians, and the day-to-day contexts in which ordinary *milites* encountered the civilian population. I should also add that of course, soldiers could sometimes prove very useful to local communities, such as when Augustus sent legionaries to the people of the Balearics in response to their desperate petition for aid in dealing with an explosion of the rabbit population.<sup>69</sup> But as I noted above, tallying individual instances of hostility or cooperation will not get us as far as a broad look at the majority of types of interactions.

One of the most significant roles involved the collection of taxes. In the early and middle empire, taxes were collected by civilian officials, whether private contractors or government officials.<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless, soldiers were commonly employed as assistants and guards by collectors of taxes (the ‘quiet violence of empire’) at all levels.<sup>71</sup> As Capponi points out, the fact that we have plenty of evidence for Roman soldiers involved in tax collection in Egypt – where a sophisticated tax-collecting bureaucracy had long been in place – indicates that this kind of military involvement was standard, not something confined to provinces which lacked well-developed administration.<sup>72</sup>

The unpopularity of tax collectors is one of a small number of things which I think most historians would accept as a universal. In the New Testament, tax collectors are frequently classed as sinners,<sup>73</sup> and in the book of Luke, John the Baptist advises the soldiers not to extort people, immediately after telling some tax collectors not to take more

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<sup>69</sup> Plin. *HN*. 8.218.

<sup>70</sup> Pollard (2000), 100-101.

<sup>71</sup> Mattingly (2011), 130.

<sup>72</sup> Capponi (2005), 134.

<sup>73</sup> E.g. Luke 5:27-32.

than they are owed.<sup>74</sup> Isaac cites a number of Talmudic sources which provide a window onto the fear and hostility associated with Roman tax collectors in Judaea.<sup>75</sup>

A first-century archive from the village of Philadelphia, pertaining to a tax collector named Nemesion, shows how such individuals might employ soldiers to get their way.<sup>76</sup> Nemesion appears to have struck up a business partnership with a local centurion, Lucius, and one letter (written by a woman named Thermouthis who was probably his wife) describes how he got Lucius to send a soldier to seize the belongings of some shepherds, who presumably had unpaid debts.<sup>77</sup> Other papyri also record assaults by tax collectors and their assistants during Roman rule, though it should be noted that the identity of these men as Roman soldiers is uncertain. A late second century Egyptian petition records how a man named Syrus petitioned the local centurion regarding his abuse at the hands of the collectors of the corn-dues, their scribe, and their assistant.<sup>78</sup> The claimant explains that he and his brother had delivered nine out of the ten artabas demanded of the village of Karanis, but on account of the single outstanding artaba, his assailants descended upon his house and assaulted his mother.

With no police force to go to other than the soldiers themselves (see below), often the only way to stave off military brutality was through bribery.<sup>79</sup> This is most remarkably illustrated by an Egyptian papyrus which records a number of payments, including one straightforwardly noted as ‘for extortion’ (*ὑπὲρ διασεισμοῦ*).<sup>80</sup> Other entries – ‘to the soldier at his demand’, ‘to the guard’, ‘to two police agents’ – also suggest pay-offs for military personnel or other official agents. The quantities of money here – 2,200 drachmae

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<sup>74</sup> Luke 3:13-14.

<sup>75</sup> Isaac (1992), 282-4.

<sup>76</sup> Hanson (1989).

<sup>77</sup> *P. Corn. Inv.* I 11: καὶ περὶ τῶν μισθῶν τῶν πυμένων, ἔλεγε ὅτι πέμπο στρατιώτη[ν . . . ] παραυτον, λέγει, εἶνα συλήσῃ τὰ παραμειμένεκε τῶν πυμένων; ‘And about the shepherds’ wages, he said, “I am sending a soldier . . . immediately,” he says, “to seize such of the shepherds’ belongings as are still in place.”

<sup>78</sup> *Sel. Pap.* 2.286.

<sup>79</sup> Also Peachin (1999), 230-1.

<sup>80</sup> *SB* 6.9207.

for extortion, entries of 500 and 400 to the soldier at his demand – are remarkable. For the reasons outlined above, legal appeals regarding such extortion were unlikely ever to be effective. Rather it seems more likely that the success of some soldiers in illegally extracting bribes would only encourage their comrades to try their hands too.

Soldiers were also in charge of supervising other kinds of extractions, including customs dues. The *Periplus Maris Erythraei* describes a place with a fortified harbour named Leuke Kome, where the Romans installed a customs collector attended by soldiers:

*Ἔχει δὲ ἐμπορίου τινὰ καὶ αὐτὴ τάξιν τοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀραβίας ἐξαρτιζομένοις εἰς αὐτὴν πλοίοις οὐ μεγάλοις. Διὸ καὶ παραφυλακῆς χάριν καὶ εἰς αὐτὴν παραλήπτῃς τῆς τετάρτης τῶν εἰσφερομένων φορτίων καὶ ἑκατοντάρχῃς μετὰ στρατεύματος ἀποστέλλεται.*

‘This harbour also serves in a way the function of a port of trade for the craft, none large, that come to it loaded with freight from Arabia. For that reason, as a safeguard there is dispatched for duty in it a customs officer to deal with the (duty of a) fourth on incoming merchandise as well as a centurion with a detachment of soldiers.’<sup>81</sup>

Dues in kind were also extracted from communities directly. A late second century Egyptian papyrus authored by the *duplicarius* Antonius Justinus describes how he went to the village of Terton Epa and had the village elders measure out the quota of grain demanded by the Romans, amounting to 20,000 artabae.<sup>82</sup>

Another form of extraction – one which clearly required military supervision and would lead unquestionably to an unfavourable view of military overseers – was corvee

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<sup>81</sup> Arr. *Peripl.* 19.

<sup>82</sup> P. *Amherst.* 107.

labour. Sometimes this was imposed on entire communities, for activities such as mining.<sup>83</sup> Cities in Anatolia were responsible for road-building, with their citizens and slaves undertaking the labour under the enforcement of Roman soldiers and officers.<sup>84</sup> It is probably to such work that Tacitus has Calgacus refer when he complains that ‘Our very hands and bodies, suffering beatings and insults (*verbera et contumelias*), are worn down by the toil of clearing forests and marshes’.<sup>85</sup>

Soldiers accompanied officials of all types: a *pridianum* from Moesia has soldiers assigned to the legate, to the office of the procurator, and ‘at the grain ships’;<sup>86</sup> such grain ship escorts are mentioned in a text on a terracotta jar from Oxyrhynchus in 2 BC, with one Lucius Castricius of the 22<sup>nd</sup> legion, fourth cohort, century of Titus Pompeius assigned to ‘marine escort duty’;<sup>87</sup> an early third century duty roster from Dura Europus has a number of soldiers sent to accompany barley collectors.<sup>88</sup> Such duties would not have led to confrontation or hostility as often as accompanying tax collectors, but the essential task of the soldiers – to deal with troublemakers, watch out for danger, and ensure that the business of imperial officials (no matter how predatory) went smoothly – hardly posited such men as friendly figures. As Pollard says, from the provincials’ perspective, ‘the distinction between civilian official and military retinue would have become blurred’;<sup>89</sup> indeed, from the perspective of the provincials, the negative aspects of living under the Roman empire bore the face just as much of the soldiery as of the proconsul.

Military involvement in policing throughout the empire has recently been discussed at length by Christopher Fuhrmann.<sup>90</sup> He demonstrates that military policing was

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<sup>83</sup> Mattingly (2011), 172-4.

<sup>84</sup> Mitchell (1993), 127.

<sup>85</sup> Tac. Ag. 31: *corpora ipsa ac manus silvis ac paludibus emuniendis inter verbera et contumelias conteruntur*.

<sup>86</sup> *RMR* 63.

<sup>87</sup> Daris, *Documenti* 66.

<sup>88</sup> *RMR* 47.

<sup>89</sup> Pollard (2000), 101.

<sup>90</sup> Fuhrmann (2011), esp. 201-38.

widespread throughout the provinces, with attestations increasing in the second and third centuries. In the early and middle empire, there is less evidence for Roman forces being heavily involved in policing major cities, probably since these places often had municipal police forces of their own.<sup>91</sup> In the non-urbanised western empire and the more rural areas of the east, however, it was to Roman soldiers that responsibility for conflict resolution, law enforcement, and dealing with banditry fell.

Naturally, policing did not always lead to negative interactions; such work might be appreciated by individuals and communities. An early third century inscription in fact records a request for a *stationarius*,<sup>92</sup> on which Campbell comments that ‘it was not always the case that local communities wished to avoid contact with the military’.<sup>93</sup> However, such evidence might not necessarily suggest trust or positive feeling. In the case of this inscription, the context is a (slightly obscure) dispute between two villages concerning their relative obligations for serving long-distance road traffic; we might just as reasonably interpret the appeal for military intervention as a typical example of local communities seeking to leverage imperial power in their favour. In one petition from Karanis, seeking help from a decurion in response to a recent robbery of her house, the petitioner emphasises her connections to the military (‘the house of myself and my brothers, who serve in the army’).<sup>94</sup> Many petitions asking for legal intervention by centurions and other figures of Roman authority in Egypt emphasise the status of the petitioner in similar ways.<sup>95</sup> As Peachin puts it, ‘the nearest soldier was often the nearest manifestation of Roman power (or law), hence, the best alternative to self-help, or sometimes the best way to circumvent less than helpful local officials.’<sup>96</sup> To seek the help of the Roman army was

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<sup>91</sup> Pollard (2000), 97-8.

<sup>92</sup> Frend (1956), I. 32-3.

<sup>93</sup> Campbell (1994), 119.

<sup>94</sup> *BGU* 1.157 – τῆ οἰκία μου καὶ τῶν στρατευομένων μου ἀδελφῶν.

<sup>95</sup> Alston (1995), 91-2.

<sup>96</sup> Peachin (1999), 224.

not to appeal to a benevolent and trustworthy arbitrator, but rather to attempt to involve powerful and pliable individuals, who might be persuaded by status, connections, or bribery.

Military involvement in policing is a key reason why civilians would have found it difficult to attain redress for low-level abuses: as suggested by Juvenal, when the investigation and judgement of abuses was the responsibility of other soldiers, military solidarity could be expected to trump fairness. The *Digest* makes it quite clear that a soldier could expect to have an advantage over a civilian in legal proceedings: writing on military discipline, Arrius Menander suggests that someone with ongoing legal proceedings should be discharged if it can be proven that they enlisted ‘in order to make themselves, as a soldier, more formidable to their adversary’.<sup>97</sup>

Rooting out banditry is certainly an aspect of Roman military activity that could have generated some positive sentiment among local communities. Along with mercenaries and city-run armed forces, soldiers were involved in protecting caravans along important routes.<sup>98</sup> However, Roman methods for dealing with banditry often caused great resentment. Ulpian says that a good procurator ‘must, besides pursuing temple robbers, kidnappers and thieves, mete out to each of them the punishment he deserves and chastise people sheltering them; without them a robber cannot hide for very long.’<sup>99</sup> One requires only a minimal acquaintance with conflicts of the last few decades to realise the probable consequences of such a policy – communities merely suspected of aiding rebels or bandits might be dealt with extremely brutally. The Romans generally held local populations

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<sup>97</sup> D. 49.16.4.8: *Non omnis, qui litem habuit et ideo militaverit, exauctorari iubetur, sed qui eo animo militiae se dedit, ut sub optentu militiae pretiosiore se adversario faceret.*

<sup>98</sup> Castro (2018), 36-7.

<sup>99</sup> D. 1.18.13: *Congruit bono et gravi praesidi curare, ut pacata atque quieta provincia sit quam regit. quod non difficile optinebit, si sollicitate agat, ut malis hominibus provincia careat eosque conquirat: nam et sacrilegos latrones plagarios fures conquirere debet et prout quisque deliquerit, in eum animadvertere, receptoresque eorum coercere, sine quibus latro diutius latere non potest.*

collectively responsible for guerrilla attacks, and do not appear to have been particularly interested in ‘winning hearts and minds’ in this regard.<sup>100</sup> Christopher Zeichmann affirms the ambiguity of military involvement in Rabbinic literature: military aid, infrastructure efforts, and some individual soldiers are praised, but there is a prevailing tone of suspicion and anxiety about the presence of soldiers.<sup>101</sup>

### Conclusion

To restate my argument: although individual instances of military abuse are plentiful, understanding whether these are best seen as isolated incidents or as part of a common pattern can be advanced by considering the contexts in which soldiers and civilians interacted. Unsupervised detached soldiers constantly traversed the empire; soldiers knew that anyone they assailed would have difficulties attaining legal redress; military requisitioning, in particular, was a legally ambiguous area in which it would be difficult to stop covetous soldiers; and the official capacities in which soldiers intervened in civilian communities were ones which were by nature likely to lead to hostility.

From the perspective of a civilian, the legal intervention of a Roman soldier might potentially be useful, and elites in particular would welcome the stability and protection from bandits that the Roman presence might offer. On the whole, however – especially for the vast majority of Roman subjects, who lacked wealth, literacy, status, or connections – the presence of Roman soldiers was something to fear. As Isaac emphasises, the army functioned as one of conquest, even during long periods of peace.<sup>102</sup> Its potential for violence against Rome’s subjects was sometimes made explicit: consider Claudius’

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<sup>100</sup> Isaac (1992), 81.

<sup>101</sup> Zeichmann (2018), 88-92.

<sup>102</sup> Isaac (1992), 5.

warning to the Greek and Jewish communities in Alexandria that ‘unless you cease this destructive and stubborn enmity against each other, I shall be forced to show what a benevolent ruler can be when turned to righteous anger’.<sup>103</sup>

My purpose is not to materially assess whether provincials were ‘winners’ or ‘losers’ as a result of Roman military presence, as for instance James has attempted.<sup>104</sup> Thinking rather about the social world of the ordinary *milites*, the preceding discussion makes the idea of military communities being socially isolated seem very likely. This separation was in some ways officially encouraged: as Alston points out, the three key legal restrictions concerning soldiers were the marriage ban, the ban on owning land in the province in which the soldier was serving, and the denial of a father’s usual paternal authority over a soldier – thus the soldier was restricted in three key areas of life: the economy, his paternal family, and any new family he might try to create.<sup>105</sup>

These conclusions reinforce the idea of a strong primary group mentality: with opportunities for socialisation outside of the military limited, and such interactions inflected with violence and fear, the conditions for primary group attachment would be strengthened. Social isolation from the wider society would drive an inward-looking mentality among the soldiers. Likewise, lacking access to ordinary civilian communities might intensify unit-level loyalty. The legion did not just resemble a town, village, or tribal community; for the legionary, it *was* their community. In a world where such communities were so essential to everyday life – far more than in the modern West – the function of the legion in playing this role deserves emphasis.

The preceding chapters may also provide further explanations for these patterns of

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<sup>103</sup> *P. Lond.* 6, 1912, lines 79-82: ἀπλῶς δὲ προσαγορεύωι ὅτι ἂν μὴ καταπαύσῃται τὴν ὀλέθριον ὀργὴν ταύτην κατ’ ἀλλήλων αὐθάδιον ἐγβιασθήσομαι δι᾽ οὗ ἐστὶν ἡγεμῶν φιλόανθρωπος εἰς ὀργὴν δικαίαν μεταβεβλημένος.

<sup>104</sup> James (2019), ch. 14.

<sup>105</sup> Alston (1995), 60.

isolation: as I explored in chapter 4, soldiers were not always very well-remunerated after deductions and corruption from their own officers. Extorting civilians, then, may well have been an attractive way to top up one's earnings, and the example set by the corrupt centurions could hardly have discouraged such behaviour. For a soldier in a 'pacified' province, opportunities for booty were cut off; extortion may then have been seen as a substitute. Additionally, in the previous chapter, I noted sociological research indicating that a hierarchical disciplinary environment imposed by officers can lead to heightened aggression on the part of the suffering soldiers – aggression which, in this case, could well have been taken out on the civilian population.

My argument for the social separation of soldiers and normal civilian communities is also reinforced in the next chapter, on the notion of extended military communities. If, as I shall argue, military units had 'their own' civilians, who provided all the services, from trade to venal sex to marriage, that might otherwise occasion soldiers to interact with local villages, towns, and cities in more amicable ways, then we have yet another reason to see the military as an insular institution – albeit one with a slightly larger and more porous circle of occupants than we have so far explored.

In the first part of this discussion of military culture, we can see that soldiers were directed to find solidarity with their fellow soldiers, separated from regular communities. For a soldier, committed to military life for a lengthy period and socially reliant on his comrades, conformity to military values was a necessity. The fear of social exclusion must have been just as influential as rigorous drill or ceremony in instilling an attachment to the military. Meanwhile, concentrating the soldier's social outlook on his military unit, making this the milieu in which he spent the vast majority of time, would have caused the legionary to further imbibe military values through sheer exposure if nothing else.

Considering normative motivation under these circumstances, we see here a kind of

motivation akin to that affecting someone fighting to defend their own community from invasion: legionaries were so deeply embedded in the communities which their units constituted that failing to support one's comrades carried enormous social risk. Soldiering was not a job, from which men could expect to return to a different community each day or at the end of a campaign; soldiering entered the legionary into a community which alienated him from civilians and demanded an enormous social commitment. A threat to the unit was near-existential for the soldier himself, his life being so thoroughly embedded in the military.

## Chapter 7: The Extended Military Community

In this chapter, I shall introduce an important development in Roman army studies from the past two decades (among archaeologists in particular): extending the idea of the ‘military community’ to include the various non-military personnel associated with military units, including families, traders, and others who provided different services at military bases.<sup>1</sup> These considerations are now beginning to influence archaeological agendas, as at Vindolanda, where a great deal has been learned about the third century extramural settlement, while pre-Hadrianic structures are also being further excavated.<sup>2</sup>

This is highly relevant to our discussion: first, it is important to account for the full range of individuals involved in the communities under discussion, who interacted with the soldiers under study; in considering the army as ‘a dynamic society in its own right’,<sup>3</sup> we must attend to the full range of participants in that society. As I argue below, there is still important work to be done to understand the extended military community, especially the different experiences of its constituent groups, which this chapter addresses. Secondly, the involvement of significant numbers of civilians in military life would have important ramifications for cohesion and primary group bonding. One of the key functions of the primary group is its satisfaction of certain primary personality needs which are usually fulfilled by family and friends. In modern militaries, primary group bonds among military personnel are necessitated by a strict segregation between the military and non-military spheres – separated from his family and friends, the unit becomes a soldier’s social world. Limited communication capacities during and shortly after World War II, when much of the seminal work on primary groups was undertaken, further restricted soldiers’ abilities to

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<sup>1</sup> Principally in James (1999), (2002); subsequently developed in James (2018), (2019); good brief review in Allison (2013), 19-22.

<sup>2</sup> Birley et al. (2016), 246-8.

<sup>3</sup> Haynes (1999), 8.

sustain contact with individuals outside their military units. If we are to ask about the importance of primary groups in the ancient world, we must question to what extent Roman soldiers' social networks extended beyond strictly military personnel.

In a 1999 article based on a paper given at TRAC 1998, Simon James argued that the various non-military groups which lived around military bases should be considered as part of the military community: 'given that these people were also supported, largely if not wholly, by the soldiers' pay, we should think of them, too, as fully members of the military communities, in a social rather than institutional sense.'<sup>4</sup> That such thinking had also begun to take hold among other scholars is evidenced in Haynes and Goldsworthy's 1999 edited volume, *The Roman Army as a Community*, which contained contributions considering the presence of women and civilian populations at forts, leading Haynes to state in his introduction that 'the picture of army camps as all-male bastions is now obsolete'.<sup>5</sup> In the last decade, the notion of an extended military community has apparently ceased to be controversial: in a 2011 work, David Mattingly took it up without indicating that it is in any way radical: 'my definition of who qualified as members of the military community is very broad—including the various senior post holders, officials and military officers, the common soldiery, the veterans who chose to settle near military bases, and a large group of civilians who lived in close proximity'.<sup>6</sup>

These developments owe much to work on evidence for the presence of women around and even inside military bases. Roman soldiers were officially banned from marrying until AD 197,<sup>7</sup> although it has long been accepted that unofficial unions existed.<sup>8</sup> However, it was assumed that military bases were strictly controlled spaces to which

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<sup>4</sup> James (1999), 23.

<sup>5</sup> Haynes (1999), 12.

<sup>6</sup> Mattingly (2011), 223.

<sup>7</sup> Eck (2011) argues that the ban persisted even after this date.

<sup>8</sup> Phang (2001).

women were not given access, forcing them to live and remain in the extramural settlements. This began to change with the much-cited work of Carol van Driel-Murray, who argued that anachronistic assumptions, particularly a 19<sup>th</sup> century view of the segregation of military space, had led scholars to radically misinterpret or overlook clear evidence for the presence of women in military contexts.<sup>9</sup> Van Driel-Murray's work on footwear as an indicator of female and child presence has become seminal.<sup>10</sup> By looking at the sizes of shoes (linked, of course, to the sizes of feet, and thus a reliable biological indicator of sex and age rather than potentially ambiguous items such as beads and bangles), van Driel-Murray argues that women were present inside military barracks in not-insignificant numbers. Her conclusions pass the test of common sense: whereas in early first-century forts, 'when family life would indeed have been difficult to maintain', one finds a curve indicating a mainly male population; later, at permanent forts with permanent *vici*, 'more conducive to family life', one finds more mixed distributions.<sup>11</sup>

Although this evidence is striking, subsequent scholars have pointed out that it is difficult to generalise from.<sup>12</sup> On a very basic level, it is also difficult to imagine families squeezing themselves into barrack blocks – or officers allowing this. Van Driel-Murray does admit that this is 'awkward', but suggests that if there were fewer men to a barrack block at this date, and not all had concubines, cohabitation may have been more feasible.<sup>13</sup> Only a few rooms may have been given over for cohabitation, as suggested by the concentration of female/child shoes only in certain rooms.

Another potential problem is flagged by van Driel-Murray's comparative evidence: the Indonesian concubines of Dutch soldiers actually conducted most of their daily

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<sup>9</sup> Van Driel-Murray (1994), 345; cf. James (2002), 11.

<sup>10</sup> Esp. van Driel-Murray (1994), (1995).

<sup>11</sup> Van Driel-Murray (1994), 345-7.

<sup>12</sup> Phang (2001), 127-8.

<sup>13</sup> Van Driel-Murray (1994), 357.

activities, and also gave birth, outside military bases. They would therefore be archaeologically invisible within the bases – hence among the Roman evidence, ‘other than their shoes, the women and children have left remarkably little trace of their presence.’<sup>14</sup> Van Driel-Murray’s work, then, cannot show whether or not women spent most of their time inside or outside the fort; and even if there was cohabitation, it might be archaeologically invisible.

The work of Penelope Allison represents a thorough attempt to advance van Driel-Murray’s conclusions by considering a larger range of ‘female objects’, and her attention to spatial contexts has wider ramifications regarding mobility and accessibility in bases and the social use of space.<sup>15</sup> Allison has somewhat overstated the absence of women in works on the Roman army, writing in 2013 that ‘all have drawn the line at such women and families living inside military bases’,<sup>16</sup> when in fact it has long been accepted that officers’ wives and families lived inside military bases.<sup>17</sup> I shall note here that Ramsay MacMullen has also been overlooked in recent scholarship – although his article *The Legion as a Society* is rightly cited as a foundational step toward modern reconsiderations of military communities, most seem to have forgotten that in his *Soldier and Civilian in the Later Roman Empire*, he not only argued that some soldiers’ wives lived inside forts,<sup>18</sup> but made some rather current-sounding statements about the relationship between military bases and their communities: ‘Emphatic statements by modern authorities about the separation of military and civilian centers reflects at best what the army commanders hoped to enforce, but the facts are quite otherwise.’<sup>19</sup> (MacMullen’s stress on isolation in *The Legion as a Society* perhaps pigeonholed him as a proponent of extreme isolation.)

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<sup>14</sup> Van Driel-Murray (1994), 355-7.

<sup>15</sup> See Allison (2013), ch. 5 on ‘sexing’ small finds.

<sup>16</sup> Allison (2013), 14.

<sup>17</sup> E.g. Allason-Jones (1999) and, of course, van Driel-Murray.

<sup>18</sup> MacMullen (1963), 126-7.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

Nonetheless, Allison's work is a thorough and sophisticated attempt to understand women's presence at military sites, and makes it difficult to deny that women accessed and moved through military bases. However, not all of its conclusions are sufficiently substantiated by the evidence we have. First, the evidence does not allow us to say that women and children lived inside the *contubernia*. Just as it was wrong to think that women were strictly excluded from military sites based on assumptions about gender segregation in military space, so too would it be wrong to assume that military bases were completely accessible and habitable by non-military personnel now that we have evidence for some civilian presence.

Secondly, we are no closer to being able to estimate the number of women inside a base. Allison does attempt to do this, but the results are unconvincing, primarily due to the small quantity of available evidence. Allison estimates the minimum and maximum likely number of women and children in a base by taking a selection of the total artefact pool, and calculating from all objects which can be classed as 'female', 'female?', and 'female?/child?' (p. 336). Thus for Vetera I, from a total artefact assemblage of 12,736, only 1,280 are selected, of which 97 are definitely or possibly female. From this Allison estimates a potential maximum number of 850 women – which on p. 337 is a figure used in a straightforward statement: 'The high number of c. 850 women and children at Vetera I indicates that they would have had a very visible presence within this fortress.' (The other bases which Allison examines have 15, 59, and 76 potentially female artefacts.) On the contrary, the relatively small number of finds seems more likely to indicate either a small female population, or one which was not permanently inside the base.

As Allison points out, a limitation of the archaeological analysis is that it does not allow us to distinguish between women of different statuses and roles; does the evidence for a 'female presence' indicate wives, tradespeople/service providers, prostitutes, slaves,

or the families of officers, who were always agreed to be present inside bases?

Archaeologically, Allison identifies a number of areas inside her military bases which seem to have been involved with the exchange of goods and services. In one building at Vetera I, a concentration of female necklace beads, gaming equipment, and fine ceramics may indicate a tavern or inn involving women.<sup>20</sup> In this chapter, using evidence such as the Didymoi ostraca in conjunction with archaeological data, I investigate more thoroughly the ways in which soldiers interacted with members of the extended military community. Non-archaeological forms of evidence are also necessary for identifying civilians other than women in military bases: since there is no such thing as an exclusively non-military object, besides exclusively female objects (a fraught category itself), it is impossible to determine the presence of civilians inside forts through archaeology. (The category of ‘military objects’ has also come under recent scrutiny as a reliable indicator of the presence of soldiers.)<sup>21</sup>

Furthermore, it is one thing to demonstrate the presence of non-military individuals, and another to argue that they shared a sense of community with the soldiers. Would our subjects have recognised the ‘extended’ military community as such? Simon James insists that these people drew their identity from the military and the unit to which they were attached, but offers as evidence for this only a passage from Tacitus which gives no indication of any sense of corporate identity,<sup>22</sup> and the suggestion that *calones* and *lixae* were ‘trained paramilitaries’ who could be called upon to fight.<sup>23</sup> But what of the broader community – indeed, how widely should this notion of community be extended? Military bases were involved in supply networks far more extensive than their immediate extramural settlements – at the legionary fortress at Chester, for example, there arose in the

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<sup>20</sup> Allison (2013), 330.

<sup>21</sup> Worrell and Pearce (2012), 38–39; Haynes (2016), 451.

<sup>22</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 2.87.

<sup>23</sup> James (2018), 40.

second century AD a whole network of productive towns.<sup>24</sup>

We can imagine a range of affiliations for non-military personnel, from occasional interaction (the travelling trader) to something approaching integration into the community, as we might imagine of the innkeeper who would have interacted with many soldiers, bonded with some, and in a very real sense became part of the fabric of camp life. But can we ever posit meaningful *membership* of the army community by non-soldiers? Soldiers swore the military oath, participated in military ceremonies, trained in a variety of military activities, and were officially attached to army sub-units which, as we have seen, became an integral part of their identities. Thus when James writes that the various non-military personnel associated with a legion ‘centred their lives on the regiment as much as the soldiers themselves, and, it is suggested, will have taken a major part of their sense of identity from this association’,<sup>25</sup> we ought to be careful: there is no evidence for non-soldiers participating in military ceremonies at any unit level, or self-identifying as members of a legion. The army was a highly formalised institution which regulated the lives of its members in numerous ways, and non-soldiers were not involved in membership of military units or activities.

This is not to deny that ‘on a daily basis, relationships are more important to people than organisational structure’,<sup>26</sup> but the nature of these relationships has yet to be fully explored. In short, I think that something of an intellectual leap has been made, from demonstrating the presence of a diverse set of people at military installations to supposing the existence of a sense of shared community. I intend to probe this more thoroughly below.

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<sup>24</sup> Ward et al. (2012), 413-4.

<sup>25</sup> James (2002), 43.

<sup>26</sup> Haynes (1999), 8.

Although the quality of preservation and extent of excavation varies widely, extramural settlements were present at all major Roman military bases; these were called *canabae* when associated with legionary fortresses, and *vici* when attached to auxiliary bases.<sup>27</sup> In practice, there was no difference between *canabae* and *vici*.<sup>28</sup> Some scholars have dispensed with the terms altogether: Mattingly, for instance, deliberately refers to ‘garrison settlements’ rather than *vici*.<sup>29</sup> Garrison settlements appear even at short-lived Augustan camps like Haltern and Dangstetten;<sup>30</sup> at Vindolanda, it appears that extramural settlements existed at all stages of the fort’s occupation.<sup>31</sup> This is an important point: although extramural settlements certainly did grow over time and in many cases became modern towns, their existence was not an aspect only of significant or long-lived military bases.

Some settlements would contain only basic dwellings, but many became highly developed and contained everything which a ‘real’ town might be expected to have. As Franzen has neatly tabulated, most *canabae* in Europe have most of the following features: a rectangular road system, amphitheatre, forum, baths, *mansio*, temples, harbour, and aqueduct.<sup>32</sup> As Mattingly summarises, ‘Not all the garrison settlements were the same... and it is important to recognize that some probably comprised little more than temporary shacks and tents flanking the approach road to a fort, while others developed over time into small towns of well-built houses’.<sup>33</sup>

Over the last few decades, the work of C. Sebastian Sommer has made a strong case for extramural settlements being not just unofficial agglomerations around military bases, and certainly not discouraged by the military, but rather being integral to military

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<sup>27</sup> Hanel (2007), 410-11.

<sup>28</sup> Sommer (2012), 83.

<sup>29</sup> Mattingly (2006), 170-1.

<sup>30</sup> Hanel (2007).

<sup>31</sup> Birley et al. (2016), 248.

<sup>32</sup> Franzen (2009), 1275.

<sup>33</sup> Mattingly (2006), 193.

communities. He argues that *vici* were established simultaneously with military camps (to the extent that the archaeological evidence can establish simultaneity), supporting the idea that ‘the majority of the camp-followers followed ‘their’ troops when they moved and so arrived at new places at the same time.’<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, the forts and their extramural settlements were integrated and interdependent – forts seem to have been designed with extramural settlements in mind, part of a ‘symbiotic relationship’.<sup>35</sup>

Scholars have noted how similar many extramural settlements were, perhaps hinting that military planners had some involvement in laying out these areas as well as the forts themselves. The three best-known *canabae* in Britain – Chester, Caerleon, and York – are notably similar: as the report on the Caerleon *canabae* summarises, ‘in our present state of knowledge there is nothing to indicate that, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and early 3<sup>rd</sup> century at least, a centurion arriving at Caerleon from a posting with any other legion on the northern frontier would have found much significant difference in the settlement which lay outside the fortress gates.’<sup>36</sup>

Literary evidence, even from the late Republic, provides some indications that extramural settlements and their inhabitants were essential, and even accompanied campaigning armies. Caesar mentions *mercatores* camped before the rampart of one of his camps in Gaul;<sup>37</sup> Josephus too seems to refer to camp followers when he describes Titus’ efforts to protect the baggage train and ‘the rest of the multitude’ (*τὸ λοιπὸν πλῆθος*) that followed it.<sup>38</sup> Tacitus mentions ‘buildings, which during a long period of peace had grown up like a town near the camp’; these were clearly tolerated by the army’s commanders,

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<sup>34</sup> Sommer (1999), 81. Greene (2020) points to Oberstimm, Aislingen, and Burghöfe as other locations where extramural settlements appear to have been constructed simultaneously with the main fort, indicating ‘an immediate need to house individuals outside the fort walls upon settlement’ (p. 152).

<sup>35</sup> Sommer (2006), 110.

<sup>36</sup> Evans et al. (2000), 501-5.

<sup>37</sup> Caes. *BG.* 6.37.

<sup>38</sup> Jos. *BJ.* 5.130-132.

since they only tore them down when enemies approached who might make use of the structures.<sup>39</sup> Archaeological evidence confirms that some *vici* were equipped with defences like the forts to which they were attached.<sup>40</sup>

It is easy to envisage why military commanders would be perfectly willing to tolerate communities of non-military personnel, and even to protect and provide for them: such communities could provide genuinely useful work. Although soldiers' families are often referred to as dependents (or disparaged as 'hucksters and hangers on'),<sup>41</sup> there was plenty of work for them to do: in the *canabae* and *vici*, people were needed to prepare meals, do laundry, and engage in productive work involving crafts, industry, or agriculture.<sup>42</sup> We ought to consider that extramural settlements and their inhabitants, far from being a drain on military productivity, might have been positive contributors, or even essential to the operations of military installations.

James suggests that some *calones* might be aspiring soldiers, learning the job while waiting for an opportunity to sign on.<sup>43</sup> This is certainly a possibility, and would add yet another layer to the army's complex social hierarchy: beneath the officers and junior officers, we have the *principales* and *immunes*, distinguished by their immunity from routine duties (to their great satisfaction, as in the letter of Julius Apollinaris the *librarius*, spared from cutting rocks);<sup>44</sup> these men would have been envied by ordinary *milites*, but these could in turn make demands of the *lixae* and *calones*, some perhaps eager to impress in hopes of enlistment. Below these were slaves, though even among this group there were diverse levels of status. The complexity of social relations within extramural settlements is

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<sup>39</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 4.22: *opera, haud procul castris in modum municipii extracta.*

<sup>40</sup> Bidwell and Hodgson (2009), 31ff; Smith and Fulford (2019).

<sup>41</sup> Welles (1951), 271.

<sup>42</sup> Allason-Jones (2016), 470; James (2018), 41.

<sup>43</sup> James (2019), 252.

<sup>44</sup> *P. Mich.* VIII. 466.

also beginning to be touched upon.<sup>45</sup> For instance, Haynes points to a dedication at Vindolanda to Dea Gallia by *cives Galli ... concordisque Britanni*, which he interprets as ‘clearly intended to foster harmony and/or celebrate shared endeavours by distinct groups within the community, possibly after tensions had broken out between them.’<sup>46</sup>

A key question is how large the extended military community might be. Extramural settlements were often large and could certainly contain considerable numbers of people. Carrington has estimated the population of the legionary *canabae* at Chester using a variety of methods which seem to indicate that the non-combatant population slightly outnumbered the soldiers in the area around the fortress.<sup>47</sup> Ratios like this were not necessarily found only at long-established forts: of the Flavian army at Cremona, Tacitus says that the number of *calones* and *lixae* (both generic terms which encompassed non-military personnel accompanying the army; see below) was larger than the 40,000 soldiers;<sup>48</sup> likewise, he says that the 60,000 Vitellian soldiers marching on Rome were accompanied by an even larger number of *calones*.<sup>49</sup> Some scholars have suggested that this evidence is reliable: Speidel claims that ‘Tacitus’ numbers may be rounded off, but he is not likely to be altogether wrong in such matters of state and public knowledge’.<sup>50</sup> However, given the rather dim view that Roman writers had of these people (in both passages, Tacitus comments on their savagery and unruliness), we cannot expect accuracy from these rhetorical passages; in fact, Tacitus seems to be presenting the high number of *calones* and *lixae* as a symptom of extraordinary indiscipline in the armies (in other words, so ill-disciplined were these armies that the number of camp-followers even exceeded the soldiers). We could therefore conclude from these passages that such numbers were in fact

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<sup>45</sup> Gardner (2007).

<sup>46</sup> Haynes (2016), 455.

<sup>47</sup> Ward et al. (2012), 373-6.

<sup>48</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 3.33.

<sup>49</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 2.87.

<sup>50</sup> Speidel (1989), 239.

unusual for campaigning armies. There is also a passage from Quintilian, who compares the excessive use of epithets by writers to ‘an army with as many *lixae* as soldiers; an army, that is, which has doubled its numbers but not its strength’.<sup>51</sup> This does not indicate that such a ratio was the norm, but it does suggest that there were known examples of armies with as many *lixae* as soldiers.

Our evidence suggests that these populations tended to be ethnically mixed: at the Caerleon *canabae*, a wide variety of construction techniques were in use simultaneously;<sup>52</sup> this is also the case at Vindolanda, where huts of mixed local and foreign construction suggest a population partly local and partly continental.<sup>53</sup> The Vindolanda tablets contain few references to the native population – most of the individuals recognisable as civilians are non-local traders and camp-followers, many of whom seem to have been connected with northern Gaul and the Rhineland, to judge from nomenclature.<sup>54</sup> This suggests some separation between those living in the extended military community and the local population, and squares well with Sommer’s argument that military units took civilian followers with them when they moved between bases and provinces.<sup>55</sup> Sommer suggests that we ought to wonder whether some followers travelled with soldiers when they were recruited;<sup>56</sup> instances of soldiers burying their mothers at military bases,<sup>57</sup> or mothers burying their sons,<sup>58</sup> could conceivably be examples of soldiers who signed up and were accompanied by their mothers and other family dependents.

Some scholars have attempted to examine patterns of object deposition in order to understand the use of space in and around military bases, and often then make inferences

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<sup>51</sup> Quint. *Inst.* 8.6.42: *nam fit longa et impedita, ut id quaestionibus eam iudices similem agmini totidem lixae habenti quot milites, cui et numerus est duplex nec duplum virium.*

<sup>52</sup> Evans et al. (2000), 469-70.

<sup>53</sup> Birley et al. (2016), 248.

<sup>54</sup> Mattingly (2006), 173-4.

<sup>55</sup> See also *ibid.*, 197-8.

<sup>56</sup> Sommer (2009), 808.

<sup>57</sup> *RIB* 1250.

<sup>58</sup> *RIB* 677.

about social integration. I discussed above the work of Penelope Allison, whose attempts to uncover the presence of women through GIS mapping is an excellent example of the possibilities and limitations of such methods. Andrew Birley has also attempted a similar method of analysis at Vindolanda, examining the spatial patterning of material culture deposition.<sup>59</sup> Noting that plenty of military equipment is found in extramural contexts, and a not insignificant number of objects associated with women are found in intramural contexts, he concludes that ‘The walls of the 3rd century fort at Vindolanda had the effect of being a porous demarcation line which enabled various sections of the community to interface and mingle’.<sup>60</sup> It should be noted that although there are enough female-associated items within the walls that we ought to attribute them to presence rather than accidental deposition, these objects are found in significantly higher numbers in extramural contexts than intramural contexts (spindle whorls 8.5:1; hairpins 7:1; bracelets 3:1; beads 19:1).<sup>61</sup> This suggests that women and families lived and worked mainly beyond the wall.

The fact that the archaeological evidence indicates that military personnel spent a good deal of time in extramural areas should be unsurprising: these areas often contained structures used by soldiers. As mentioned above, many *canabae* in Europe had amphitheatres, forums, baths, *mansiones*, temples, and harbours.<sup>62</sup> There is inscriptional evidence for many of these structures being built by the military, such as the amphitheatre at Lambaesis, and undoubtedly they were primarily intended for the use of the soldiers. Some archaeologists have assumed that non-military personnel were excluded from such structures, or permitted in only on exceptional occasions, such as when military numbers

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<sup>59</sup> Birley (2010), (2013).

<sup>60</sup> Birley (2010), 294.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 290.

<sup>62</sup> Franzen (2009), 1275.

were low due to the absence of vexillations or poor recruitment.<sup>63</sup> This is another interesting example of scholars perhaps making anachronistic assumptions about the segregation of military space; in reality, we have no reason to think that amphitheatres, baths, temples, and other extramural structures which bear evidence of military construction were prohibited from being used by non-military personnel – in fact, it seems reasonable to assume shared use. The extramural location of these buildings, and buildings of non-military construction which soldiers must have frequented, such as inns, brothels, and shops, suggests an interesting point: important areas for socialising and leisure time were shared between both soldiers and non-soldiers.

Occasionally, we also find structures that are usually found within forts instead among the extramural buildings. Greene suggests that the granary at Emerkingen, located not within the fort but in the extramural settlement, shows that ‘there was not a substantial difference between the defined use of the two areas’.<sup>64</sup> A very intriguing piece of evidence cited by Sommer is a Hadrianic milestone, 4 ½ miles from Lancaster fort.<sup>65</sup> The milestone gives the distance not to the fort structure, but to the edge of the extramural settlement. ‘If this is a general pattern, which is not unlikely,’ concludes Sommer, then the military vicus must have been considered as an integral part of the fort’.<sup>66</sup> Given that so many buildings used by military personnel were located in extramural settlements, we should not be surprised that forts were conceived of as including their *canabae* and *vici*.

Of course, we cannot necessarily infer social integration from considerations such as these. One space where we could look for social separation would be cemeteries around forts – were soldiers and non-combatants buried separately, or together? Tombstones were important for communicating military identity – as we have seen, tombstones often

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<sup>63</sup> Evans et al. (2000), 503.

<sup>64</sup> Greene (2020), 152.

<sup>65</sup> Sommer (1984), 25-6; *RIB* 2272.

<sup>66</sup> Sommer (1984), 26.

recorded the soldier's legion and century. If accompanied by a relief, this would typically depict the soldier in military dress, either with full armour or the distinctive military belt or cloak, or sidearms.<sup>67</sup> We can generally identify cemeteries used by the military from their proximity to military bases, and they often do contain a few tombstones and burial items which confirm the presence of soldiers. Of course, burials always far outnumber tombstones, and it is almost impossible to identify whether any individual is of military or civilian origin without epigraphic evidence.<sup>68</sup> That is, unless they are a woman or a child, which can sometimes be determined.

Some sites certainly suggest predominantly military use, mainly containing adult males rather than females and children. This is the case at the Abbeyfield burial site at Caerleon, for instance, where of the 61 cremations that the excavators were able to make judgement, 32 were certainly and 12 were probably adult males; 2 were certainly and 6 were probably adult females; 7 were certainly and 2 were probably children.<sup>69</sup> Karen Pollock suggests the fact that the Abbeyfield site was rapidly abandoned 'may imply that there was a move towards more socially inclusive *canabae* cemeteries as the Roman period progressed'.<sup>70</sup>

Cemeteries where inscriptions allow us to learn the identities of those interred also provide mixed evidence: one at Watling Street contains three legionary tombstones as well as one belonging to a woman,<sup>71</sup> and artefacts such as mirrors have also been taken to suggest a mixed gender population.<sup>72</sup> Brougham shows some military presence – pyre debris includes fragments of weapons and other military objects, while some relief

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<sup>67</sup> Hope (2003), 84-7.

<sup>68</sup> Jones (1984).

<sup>69</sup> Evans and Maynard (1997), 189.

<sup>70</sup> Pollock (2006), 27.

<sup>71</sup> *RIB* 292-295.

<sup>72</sup> Pollock (2006), 64.

fragments look military; but there are also several burials of women and children.<sup>73</sup> The cemeteries north and south of the extramural settlement at Hüfingen were both mixed, with no indication of separation or clustering among the burials, leading Elizabeth Greene to suggest that ‘the population formed a single community’.<sup>74</sup>

Such mixed evidence is the norm. One could conclude that there was absolutely no such thing as a ‘military cemetery’, that the Romans had no such concept, and that non-combatants and soldiers were therefore buried side by side; alternatively, the existence of cemeteries in which military personnel predominate might suggest that there were military cemeteries, but some select members of the extended community were allowed to be interred in them too. Without new sources on the organisation of military burials, this question will probably remain irresolvable. We can say quite definitively, however, that as with forts themselves, the cemeteries in which soldiers were buried were not strictly inaccessible to non-combatants.

Interestingly, there are indications that extramural communities had some sense of collective identity. We have a number of inscriptions set up by *vicani*, i.e. the inhabitants of the *vicus*, at places including Carlisle,<sup>75</sup> Vindolanda,<sup>76</sup> and Housesteads.<sup>77</sup> Naturally, *vici* and *canabae* had their own *genii*; sometimes dedications have been found to the *genius canabiarum*,<sup>78</sup> and sometimes to the *genius* of the *canabenses* themselves.<sup>79</sup> Andrew Birley points out that all of the inscriptions from Britain mentioning the *vicani* are religious, suggesting that ‘if there was a corporate identity or collective responsibility attached to the use of the term, one that was separate from that of the army, it may have been through

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<sup>73</sup> Cool (2004).

<sup>74</sup> Greene (2020), 153.

<sup>75</sup> *RIB* 899.

<sup>76</sup> *RIB* 1700.

<sup>77</sup> *RIB* 1616.

<sup>78</sup> E.g. *CIL* XIII, 5967.

<sup>79</sup> *CIL* III, 1008: *Fortunae Aug(ustae) sacr(um) et Gen[i]o canabensium*.

religious expression, rather than self-government or self-determination'.<sup>80</sup> Setting aside the fact that we would expect such inscriptions to be mainly religious in any case, it is notable that dedications are set up by or on behalf of the occupants of the extramural settlements distinct from the military personnel.<sup>81</sup> On the other hand, the identification of the *canabae* in these inscriptions as belonging to a particular legion (e.g. the *canabae legionis XI Claudiae* and the *canabae legionis V Macedonicae*)<sup>82</sup> is potentially significant: that they are associated with military units rather than with geographical locations suggests, first, that legions had 'their' followers, travelling with the unit to different bases as we saw above; and secondly, that legion affiliation might have been a component of the identity of a *canabensis*. This latter point is speculative; we possess no equivalent of the inscriptions or graffiti in which individual legionaries identify themselves by unit, but for a *consistens in canabis legionis*, whose exact location might change as a unit moved, the main constant in such a person's life – and the answers to the questions *Who are you? Where are you from?* – involved the legion.

Another important point arising from these inscriptions is that they reveal another distinction within extramural communities, between citizens and non-citizens. This was not always a barrier to cooperative religious activity, as in the inscription from Durostorum set up by the *civi Romani et consistenses in canabis*; in other cases, only the citizens were involved, as in an inscription from Apulum set up by the councillors and the 'Roman citizens living in the *canabae*'.<sup>83</sup> Another distinct group which appears in inscriptions from the *canabae* are the veterans, as in an inscription on an altar from Troesmis, bestowed as a

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<sup>80</sup> Birley (2010), 26.

<sup>81</sup> E.g. *CIL* III, 7474, 'on behalf of the Roman citizens and those who dwell in the Aelian *canabae* of Legion XI Claudia' (*c(ivibus) R(omanis) et consis{s}tentibus in / canabis Aelis leg(ionis) XI Cl(audiae)*).

<sup>82</sup> *CIL* III, 7474; *CIL* III, 6166.

<sup>83</sup> *CIL* III, 7474: *c(ivibus) R(omanis) et consis{s}tentibus in / canabis*; ILS 9106: *conscribti / et c(ives) R(omani) consist(entes) / kan(abis) leg(ionis)*.

gift ‘for the veterans and Roman citizens living at the *canabae* of *legio V Macedonica*’.<sup>84</sup> Many veterans remained in the same provinces as their legions, settling in nearby colonies, but others chose to remain closer still, and settled in the *canabae*. For instance, at Apulum, where the *canabae* of *legio I Adiutrix* were located, the evidence suggests that veterans were settling there from very early on in its existence.<sup>85</sup> Lucius Silius Maximus, a man who identifies himself as a veteran and as *magistrans primus in canabis*, set up a dedication to Fortune and the *genius canabensium*.<sup>86</sup> Although veterans could set up their own organisations, exclusively for veterans, they might also become members and leading figures of civilian organisations in the *canabae*, such as one *veteranus leg. XVI curator civium Roman(orum) Mogontiaci*.<sup>87</sup>

Veterans and their associations may well have acted as a glue between the extramural communities in which they dwelt and the military units in which had previously served. Often becoming men of standing in the extramural communities, they also often maintained active involvement in the social world of the legion, setting up joint dedications with serving soldiers.<sup>88</sup> Many veterans took up business interests which were closely connected with the army, such as Gaius Gentilius Victor, veteran of *legio XXII Primigenia*, who became a sword dealer.<sup>89</sup> These professions were frequently related to trades that the soldiers had learned and practised in the army.<sup>90</sup> An interesting cycle thus developed, whereby soldiers learned trades during their service, and at the end of their terms of service, had the opportunity to invest their discharge bonus in business opportunities related to those trades, supplying the army in which they had served.

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<sup>84</sup> *CIL* III, 6166: *vet(erani) et c(ives) R(omani) cons(istentes) ad / canab(as) leg(ionis) V Ma(cedonicae)*.

<sup>85</sup> Mann (1983), 39.

<sup>86</sup> *CIL* III, 1008.

<sup>87</sup> *ILS* 2465.

<sup>88</sup> E.g. *AE* 1974, 570.

<sup>89</sup> *CIL* XIII, 6677.

<sup>90</sup> Verboven (2007), 311.

On the one hand, then, veterans formed a distinct and privileged social category within the *canabae*, as emphasised by inscriptions differentiating between veterans and other groups. On the other hand, these men were an important bridge between the worlds of the soldiers and the extended community. The economic attractiveness of legionary bases would have owed just as much to the veterans dwelling in the *canabae* as to the salaried serving soldiers: the discharge bonus of 3,000 denarii gave veterans tremendous spending power, and their desire to invest in business opportunities or take on employees would have contributed to military bases being hotbeds of commercial activity.

One issue with current work on extended military communities is the tendency not to differentiate between the groups which are taken to constitute such communities, nor to consider questions of belonging and social connectedness as they related to those specific groups. Besides veterans, military communities contained soldiers' wives and families, slaves and servants, and traders and other economic agents. In an effort to more closely examine these constituent groups on their own terms, I will look at two under-studied groups in depth: suppliers/economic agents, and slaves.

### Traders, Suppliers, and Economic Agents

Much of the scholarship on extended military communities either explicitly or implicitly concerns itself with suppliers: people who were attracted to army units and military bases because of the financial opportunities involved in supplying the soldiers. Our documentary sources, from the Vindolanda tablets to the Mons Claudianus ostraca, demonstrate that supplying the army involved a mixture of civilian contractors, military labour, and private entrepreneurs.<sup>91</sup> That the latter were attracted to military bases is no surprise, given the

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<sup>91</sup> Whittaker (2004), 88-114.

spending power of soldiers and veterans. It is clear that individual soldiers were active consumers, as attested by evidence such as the Vindolanda tablets, in which we find soldiers purchasing goods ranging from bacon to towels to pepper.<sup>92</sup> There are some needs, such as textiles and clothing, for which we have no evidence of military-organised manufacture, and thus may have been supplied by civilian contractors.<sup>93</sup>

There is little evidence for these individuals to be found in literature. They are among those to whom the terms *calones* and *lixae* can refer – but these terms also encompass a wide variety of other people. For *lixae*, Cuvigny lists five different groups to which the term can refer: general non-military followers of the army; vendors and sellers; *mercatores* and *negotiatores*; a group equivalent to *calones* or *galearii*; and arguably performers and prostitutes.<sup>94</sup> As for *calones*, Morris Silver summarises in a recent paper: ‘*calones* are sometimes free employees, sometimes slaves of individual soldiers, and sometimes public slaves.’<sup>95</sup> Welwei also explored the imprecise Latin terminology across several authors.<sup>96</sup>

This is itself a significant point: when our literary sources mention the traders who accompanied the army, they are usually lumped in with the mass of slaves, servants, and other ‘camp followers’. Tacitus describes with disapproval a mass of *calones* and *lixae* accompanying the Vitellian army in AD 69, and emphasises their involvement in the shocking sack of Cremona, attributing much of the disorder to them.<sup>97</sup> This was a well-worn trope; Sallust describes how Metellus banned anyone from selling cooked bread or other prepared foods in his camp when he sought to restore discipline.<sup>98</sup> Given the

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<sup>92</sup> *Tab. Vindol.* II.182, 184.

<sup>93</sup> Verboven (2007), 305.

<sup>94</sup> Cuvigny (2003b), 365-9.

<sup>95</sup> Silver (2016), 211.

<sup>96</sup> Welwei (1988), 86-90.

<sup>97</sup> *Tac. Hist.* 2.87, 3.33.

<sup>98</sup> *Sal. Jug.* 45.

terminological vagueness of our authors and their moralising tendencies, there is little that our limited set of literary references to traders can tell us.

The sub-literary and inscriptional evidence is far more profitable, and provides us with numerous named examples of individual traders as well as important insights into the military economy. I noted above the example of Gaius Gentilius Victor, the veteran of *legio XXII Primigenia* who became a sword dealer.<sup>99</sup> A centurion by the name of Quintus Atilius Primus also became a *negotiator* after his discharge, creating a profitable enterprise in Pannonia Superior,<sup>100</sup> while Vitalinius Felix, a veteran of *legio I Minervia*, became a seller of pottery.<sup>101</sup>

Some traders, even if they were not veterans themselves, benefited from familial connections to the military, such as a *negotiator vestarius* called Iulius Victor, based in Augusta Vindelicum in Raetia, who had a brother called Clemens – an *aquilifer* in *legio III Italica* in Raetia.<sup>102</sup> A *negotiator purpurarius* named Victorius Regulus, a native from near Noviomagus Nemetae in Germania Superior, established himself in Reims, while his brother – a veteran of *legio XXII Primigenia Pia Fidelis*, stationed in Mogontiacum – resided at Lugdunum.<sup>103</sup> Clearly, it was beneficial for a prospective supplier to have some personal contacts with the soldiery. Indeed, it would seem from evidence such as this, the brothers serving in the military noted in chapter 1, and the family members accompanying soldiers mentioned above, that whole families might centre their lives around the army.<sup>104</sup>

The Didymoi ostraca also present interesting insights into the activities of civilian merchants in the military sphere. From numerous ostraca across the Roman eastern desert

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<sup>99</sup> *CIL* XIII, 6677.

<sup>100</sup> *AE* 1988, 938.

<sup>101</sup> *CIL* XIII, 1906.

<sup>102</sup> *CIL* III, 5816.

<sup>103</sup> *AE* 1982, 709.

<sup>104</sup> Julius Apollinaris, the soldier whom we have encountered attempting to leverage his literacy for a quick promotion, was also the son of a legionary, Sabinus: Alston (1995), 134-5.

emerges the curious figure of Philokles, who seems to have been a Greek-speaking Egyptian, making a living in the early second century by providing the Roman garrisons with vegetables and prostitutes (Bulow-Jacobsen styles him a ‘pimp and greengrocer’).<sup>105</sup> His orthography is largely phonetic, suggesting that his education in Greek literacy did not extend much beyond what was necessary for conducting his business.<sup>106</sup>

Philokles managed his business through a number of agents (often the recipients of his letters), as well as members of his family.<sup>107</sup> This use of agents would surely have been the case elsewhere, meaning that in terms of social interactions, many of the wealthier businesspeople about whom we know from inscriptional evidence would never have interacted with the soldiers that constituted their market; rather, it was their agents on the ground with whom the soldiers interacted, and who may more plausibly be suggested to be members of a shared community. One particularly interesting ostrakon involves Kapparis, one of Philokles’ business partners, complaining to Philokles that he has written directly to a client and passed over him:<sup>108</sup>

*Κάπαρι Φιλοκλήτι χ(αίρειν).*  
*[μη] ἔπεμψες φάσιν ὧδέ*  
*τινι ὅτι αἰάν τι χρήσῃ*  
*τὸ πραισίδιν γράψον μοι καὶ*  
*πέμψω σοι γράψον μοι μᾶλλον.*  
*τὰ ἔχω ὅδε, παραδόσο αὐτὰ.*  
*ἄρκεῖ ἂ πεποιήκατε με, σὺ*  
*καὶ αὐτός. ἔρρος(ο).*

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<sup>105</sup> Bulow-Jacobsen (2019), 33.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>108</sup> *O. Krok.* 2.177.

‘Kapparis to Philokles, greetings. You sent word here to someone saying: ‘If the *praesidium* is in need of anything, write to me and I shall send it to you.’ You should rather write to me. What I have here, I shall give it. It is enough what you have done for me, not least you yourself. Farewell.’

Philokles and his associates not only supplied soldiers, but employed them as part of their supply networks. In one ostrakon, for example, the writer tells Sknips that he has sent her ‘through Ammonios the horseman a bunch of vegetables, and through Ditouporos the horseman a bunch of vegetables for Steios, and a bunch for Fronto through Domitius Moschos’.<sup>109</sup> In another ostrakon, Philokles seeks a loan of sixty drachmas from a man named Klaudios, who is connected with the *curator* of Krokodilo and was likely a soldier.<sup>110</sup> The business conducted by Philokles and his associates, then, involved them being deeply embedded in the social world of the soldiers. Throughout the ostraca, we find Philokles and different individuals in his network living at different forts, including the prostitutes, their guardians, and their pimps examined below.

The best-known and most revealing written evidence for military supply in general is to be found among the Vindolanda tablets. However, as Whittaker rightly notes, the tablets ‘do not contain references to anyone who can be identified for certain as a free, civilian worker. But equally there are a number of men engaged in transactions outside the camp who could well have been civilians.’<sup>111</sup> Many of the named individuals, such as Lucius the shield maker, might be soldiers with assigned duties as in the duty rosters, or slaves, or independent civilians.<sup>112</sup> Certainly, scholars have attempted to identify likely candidates for civilian traders, such as the author of an account of sums owed for various

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<sup>109</sup> *O. Krok.* 2.204.

<sup>110</sup> *O. Did.* 167.

<sup>111</sup> Whittaker (2004), 92.

<sup>112</sup> *Tab. Vindol.* II 184, line 21 (*Lucius scutarius*).

goods,<sup>113</sup> and a recurring supplier called Gavo.<sup>114</sup> A more recently discovered tablet which is tempting to ascribe to travelling civilians – a request for *hospitium* close to the fort – could also be a military party.<sup>115</sup> Given the official acceptance of extramural communities evidenced in fort planning as discussed above, however, it would not be surprising for important suppliers to have been given official accommodation.

Even if we cannot identify any one individual in the tablets as a civilian trader, the picture that they present of military bases as bustling centres of exchange would certainly suggest an environment in which interactions between traders and soldiers were frequent and important. The picture provided by the Vindolanda tablets fits well with that offered by the ostraca relating to Philokles, and there is no reason to doubt that traders established similar networks all across the empire.

Archaeological evidence can also elucidate the relationships between soldiers and traders. As discussed above, extramural settlements appear to have been established more or less simultaneously with the bases to which they were attached – including some buildings recognisably linked to trade and industry. At Bearsden Fort on the Antonine Wall, for instance, a workshop was set up at the same time as the fort.<sup>116</sup> Whittaker cites the beginning of intensive pottery production in the early first century AD near the legionary camp at Chester, and a leather production centre which likewise appeared immediately after the Claudian invasion near Colchester, as evidence that civilian workers accompanied the army even in the very earliest stages of invasion and occupation.<sup>117</sup>

As well as production facilities established alongside military bases, we have plenty of archaeological evidence for imported goods, such as pottery from Spain and Gaul

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<sup>113</sup> *Tab. Vindol.* II 182.

<sup>114</sup> *Tab. Vindol.* II 192, 207, 218.

<sup>115</sup> *Tab. Vindol.* 880.

<sup>116</sup> Breeze (2016), 137-40.

<sup>117</sup> Whittaker (2004), 92.

being consumed by soldiers in Britain, and continental foodstuffs like olives brought to Hadrian's Wall.<sup>118</sup> Some occupants of early *canabae* would surely have been agents working on behalf of other traders, living in proximity to the soldiers that constituted their market while receiving goods from elsewhere. Perhaps Barathes, the Palmyrene who came to Arbeia, was the local agent of a trade that stretched all the way to the Roman East.<sup>119</sup>

Allison suggests that the archaeological evidence for commercial activities at Roman military bases strongly indicates that traders could enter the fort to sell goods or services, with coin concentrations suggesting that such activities predominantly took place along the main street.<sup>120</sup> Convincing cases have been made for the presence of taverns within military bases at a number of sites: Allison identifies one at Vetera on the basis of necklace beads, gaming equipment, and considerable quantities of fine ceramics;<sup>121</sup> similarly, a building at Vindonissa where gaming equipment, dice, and kitchen utensils were found has also been suggested to be an inn.<sup>122</sup> The provision of goods and services within military bases, not just in the extramural camps, truly cuts against traditional assumptions about the separation of military space.

### Slaves

As well as those who were drawn to military communities for economic opportunities, a great many were present through compulsion. Although there is a decent quantity of literature on soldiers' slaves, recent treatments of the extended military community have

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<sup>118</sup> Fulford (1991); *Tab. Vindol.* II 302.

<sup>119</sup> *RIB* 1065.

<sup>120</sup> Allison (2013), 330, 349.

<sup>121</sup> Allison (2013), 330.

<sup>122</sup> Speidel (1996), 187; see below on a potential proprietor or worker, Belica.

generally neglected to treat this group separately.<sup>123</sup> Of all the groups which constituted the extended military community, slaves are arguably the most important to treat distinctly: their experiences would have been greatly different due to their status, and considering them as part of a community requires added nuance. I will first consider military slaves generally, before taking the rare opportunity to explore the reality of slaves' experiences in the case of prostitutes.

Military slaves can be difficult to identify. As discussed above, the terms *calones* and *lixae* certainly can include slaves, but can also include people of various other statuses. *Galearius* is a specifically military term (the term comes from a helmet, *galea*), but precisely what it means is unclear. Roth suggests that a *galearius* 'might have served as a kind of officer over the other military slaves', and cites Vegetius, who claims that the Romans 'decided to marshal the baggage-trains like the soldiers under certain standards; so they selected men of ability and experience from among the *calones* whom they call *galearii* (*ex ipsis calonibus quos galiarios uocant*), and put them in charge of up to 200 pack-animals and *pueri*.'<sup>124</sup> If we compare another statement by Vegetius, that the Romans 'trained to swim not only their infantry but also their cavalrymen and their horses and *lixae*, who are called *galearii* (*sed et equites ipsosque equos uel lixas, quos galiarios uocant*)', it seems that Vegetius is either confused about his terminology or is introducing *galearius* as a term for military slaves generally.<sup>125</sup> Historical sources do sometimes use 'civilian' Latin and Greek terms for slaves (e.g. *serui*, *pueri*, *θεράποντες*);<sup>126</sup> these also appear on ostraca and writing tablets.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> On military slaves: Rouland (1977); Wierschowksi (1984), 65-7; Welwei (1988); Speidel (1989b); Roth (1994); Roth (1999), 91-115; Wesch-Klein (1998), 110-5; Vishnia (2002); Phang (2005); Kampen (2013); Silver (2016).

<sup>124</sup> Roth (1999), 108; Veg. *Mil.* 3.6.

<sup>125</sup> Veg. *Mil.* 1.10.

<sup>126</sup> Roth (1999), 101-2.

<sup>127</sup> E.g. *Tab. Vindol.* II. 347 (*seruus*); *O.Did.* 438 (*παιδάριον*).

Trying to gauge the number of slaves that might attend an army is difficult. Of the Flavian army at Cremona, Tacitus says that the number of *calones* and *lixae* was larger than the 40,000 soldiers;<sup>128</sup> likewise, he says that the 60,000 Vitellian soldiers marching on Rome were accompanied by an even larger number of *calones*.<sup>129</sup> Another source which potentially indicates high numbers of servants and slaves is Quintilian, who compares the excessive use of epithets by writers to ‘an army with as many *lixae* as soldiers; an army, that is, which has doubled its numbers but not its strength’.<sup>130</sup> However, since these terms might encompass a wide range of people (and Tacitus does not seem to be using them with precision, rather gesturing to the unruly masses following the armies), these sources can tell us little about numbers. Nor do they indicate that slaves and servants matching or outnumbering soldiers was normal; if anything, the situation seems aberrant, at least for an army on the march.

Jonathan Roth, comparing the number of muleteers in 19<sup>th</sup> century American armies, suggests a combatant to (service role) non-combatant ratio of 4:1, conflating all such non-military personnel with ‘military slaves’.<sup>131</sup> As well as the fact that many of the individuals performing logistical roles could have been free rather than slaves, Roth’s claim that his ratio is reasonable ‘for a highly professional military force such as the Roman army’ seems to assume that Roman armies were accompanied only by as many slaves as were necessary to fulfil strictly military tasks. When dealing with a society where servile labour was so pervasive, and employed in such a wide variety of contexts as it was in the Roman world, we ought to be wary of making assumptions about the place of slaves

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<sup>128</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 3.33.

<sup>129</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 2.87.

<sup>130</sup> Quint. *Inst.* 8.6.42: *nam fit longa et impedita, ut id quaestionibus eam iudices similem agmini totidem lixas habenti quot milites, cui et numerus est duplex nec duplum virium.*

<sup>131</sup> Roth (1999), 113-4.

in Roman armies.<sup>132</sup>

True, in the trope of the disciplinarian reformer, slaves and servants were among those targeted by commanders seeking to restore order. Metellus removed ‘incentives to idleness’ (*adiumenta ignaviae*) by banning the sale of bread or other cooked provisions, forbidding *lixae* to follow the army, and ‘allowing no ordinary soldier to have a slave or beast of burden, either in camp or on the march’ (*ne miles hastatus aut gregarius in castris neue in agmine seruum aut iumentum haberet*).<sup>133</sup> Appian relates that Scipio, on campaign against the Numantians, restored discipline by ejecting traders, prostitutes, diviners, and soothsayers from the camp, and ‘those who had servants to bathe and anoint them were ridiculed by Scipio, who said that only mules, which had no hands, needed others to rub them.’<sup>134</sup>

However, Appian does not actually state that Scipio banned such servants or ordered them to be ejected. Valerius Maximus’ version of the tale, moreover, does not mention slaves: he claims that Scipio ordered ‘everything which had been assembled for the purpose of pleasure be taken away and removed’ (*edixit ut omnia ex iis quae voluptatis causa comparata erant auferrentur ac summoventur*), whereupon numerous *institores* and *lixae* left the camp, along with two thousand prostitutes.<sup>135</sup> Though *lixae* could refer here to slaves and servants, Valerius Maximus is probably referring primarily to traders (Appian’s *ἐμπόρους*). Florus’ account (rarely cited) is the only one which states that *calones* were removed, along with prostitutes and unnecessary baggage.<sup>136</sup>

In fact, the author of the *African War* indicates that it was normal for slaves to

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<sup>132</sup> Bodel (2011), 312: ‘there were few types of work from which slaves were excluded and none which only they performed: there was no peculiarly slave labour.’ Cf. Phang (2005), 209ff, pointing out how modern armies have relied to different extents on servants or non-soldiers performing labour on behalf of soldiers.

<sup>133</sup> Sal. *Iug.* 45.

<sup>134</sup> App. *Iber.* 85: *κάν τοῖς ἀλείμμασι καὶ λουτροῖς ἑαυτοῦς ἤλειπον, ἐπισκόπωντος τοῦ Σκιπίωνος ὡς αἱ ἡμίονοι χεῖρας οὐκ ἔχουσαι χρήζουσι τριβόντων.*

<sup>135</sup> Val. Max. 2.7.1.

<sup>136</sup> Flor. *Epit.* 1.34.10.

attend to soldiers on campaign, when he states that Caesar had forbidden slaves (*manicipia*) to be taken to Sicily, ‘nor anything else which the soldiers were accustomed to have’ (*neque ullam rem quae usui militi esse consuevit*).<sup>137</sup> The only reason that slaves (as well as extra baggage) were forbidden was so that as many soldiers as possible could be transported; when Caesar later reprimanded a tribune of the Tenth legion for transporting members of his own household and beasts of burden rather than soldiers, he stated that this ‘deprived the state of soldiers at a time of need’.<sup>138</sup> Notable too are the stories about restoring discipline which make no mention of slaves, including Fronto’s praise of Verus,<sup>139</sup> Tacitus’ description of Corbulo’s remedial measures,<sup>140</sup> and Suetonius’ description of Galba’s discipline.<sup>141</sup>

Overall, the evidence does not indicate that commanders ‘emphasized that soldiers should not claim the civilian privileges of slave ownership’, or that soldiers were ‘denied the personal services and status affirmation that slave ownership provided’, as Phang extrapolates from the anecdote about Scipio in Numantia.<sup>142</sup> Soldiers on campaign were not supposed to be pampered or shirk military labour, but so long as slaves were not among *iis quae voluptatis causa* or *adiumenta ignaviae*, there is no indication that their presence was disapproved of. We ought to remember too that the stories of Scipio and Metellus ejecting slaves and servants come from a period when soldiering was not fully professionalised, and a man’s stint in the army was temporary. In such a context, bringing slaves on campaign meant transplanting one’s own household into a war zone – a disruptive or even dangerous act if supplies were imperilled or transport was limited.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> *Bell. Afr.* 47.

<sup>138</sup> *Bell. Afr.* 54 (*militibus tempore necessario res publica caret*); cf. *Caes. BC.* 3.6.

<sup>139</sup> Fronto, *Ad Verum Imp.* 2. 1.19-20; *Principia Historiae* 12-13.

<sup>140</sup> *Tac. Ann.* 13.35.

<sup>141</sup> *Suet. Gal.* 6.

<sup>142</sup> Phang (2008), 236; cf. Welwei (1988), 108, who claims that ‘wurde im Prinzipat die Zahl der Troßknechte wohl generell strenger kontrolliert’.

<sup>143</sup> Cf. *Bell. Afr.* 54.

Another important consideration is that, although the sources do not differentiate between privately owned slaves and those attached to the army, it was presumably the former who drew the ire of Metellus and Scipio. There is no reason to think that a large number of slaves at a military camp would be thought improper or a sign of indiscipline, or that commanders would seek to reduce their number. To take an alternative historical parallel to Roth's, consider these remarks of lieutenant-colonel Matthew Stewart from 1826:<sup>144</sup>

‘It is sufficiently known, that an East Indian army is habitually attended by an immense concourse of camp-followers. Three camp-followers to one fighting man, is certainly, in Bengal, a moderate average. Such have been the habits of war in the country, from the earliest times, and the effect of long experience has been to mature a system of purveyance by which it is rendered perfectly convenient. The establishments of travelling grain-merchants and moving bazaars, connecting themselves with all the subordinate descriptions of industry in the country, make an Indian camp, like a shifting city in which all the wants of native life, are as well or better supplied than in the cantonments of a regiment.’

British authors like Stewart had a dim view of Indian camp followers, much as Roman elite authors looked down on the *calones* and *lixae* of their own armies.<sup>145</sup> Nonetheless, in this passage Stewart admits the utility of the vast train of servants and purveyors – contributing to, rather than detracting from, military efficiency. Armies throughout history have made use of vastly different numbers of non-combatant personnel, and possessed quite different views on the benefits of their presence. We ought to be careful, therefore, both in assuming the relevance of any particular historical analogy, and in assuming like Roth that the more efficient an army's soldiers were, the fewer servants we might expect to

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<sup>144</sup> Stewart (1826), 47-8.

<sup>145</sup> Cherian (2004).

accompany it.

Indeed, as I discuss below, slaves and servants engaged in numerous functions beyond pampering owners rich enough to afford such a luxury. However, let us return to the question of numbers, now that we have seen that there was not an ideological imperative to keep their numbers low. Although some authors have tried to estimate the soldier-to-slave ratio, these have all been complete guesses, as Welwei has shown.<sup>146</sup> Unless new evidence comes to light, we will never know how many slaves were typically employed by army units. As for slaves owned by individual soldiers, we might at least try to estimate the average legionary's capacity to purchase a slave.

In chapter 4, I examined the soldier's pay in detail. Although the evidence is scanty, we possess three main documents to indicate how much disposable income a soldier might have after their pay deductions: *RMR* 68, in which the soldiers were left with 40% and 35% of their annual wage; *RMR* 69 (28% retained); and *P. Yadin* 722 (37% retained). If we take the mean (35%), we can estimate that a soldier would have 315 sesterces to spend per year before Domitian's pay rise (i.e. while pay was still 900 sesterces annually) and 420 sesterces after the pay rise. This full amount would surely not have been saved; soldiers would purchase goods and services, pay bribes, etc. A diligent man would have been able to save perhaps a couple of hundred sesterces per year.

Scheidel tabulates slave prices from Roman Egypt relating to slaves of known age and gender, and calculates that slaves aged 6-15 cost on average 880 drachmae, while those aged 16-25 cost on average 1,000 drachmae.<sup>147</sup> Prices outside Egypt seem higher: Petronius and Martial suggest 1,200 sesterces was a typical price for a relatively unskilled slave, while Horace suggests 2000; real recorded prices for adult slaves are higher, from

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<sup>146</sup> Welwei (1988), 81-112 is unsparing, calling Nissen's often-cited numbers *geradezu willkürlich*.

<sup>147</sup> Scheidel (2005), 3. Mean values, excluding top outlier for slaves aged 16-25.

2,500 to 4,000 sesterces.<sup>148</sup> There are a few military examples: in AD 151, a soldier of the fleet bought a female slave for 625 denarii (2,500 sesterces);<sup>149</sup> while in AD 160, a soldier of *XIII Gemina* bought a female slave for 420 denarii (1,680 sesterces).<sup>150</sup>

These are high prices relative to the soldier's wage. Based on our preceding calculations and assuming no prior savings, the soldier from *XIII Gemina* would have to serve for four years and never spend a single sestertius of the 420 left to him each year after deductions. Although soldiers from wealthier families would have the money to purchase slaves sooner, or might even take one with them from their home, for other soldiers it may have taken a decade or more of saving to be able to afford a single slave – and once purchased, the slave would need to be fed and clothed, while their work was not as obviously profitable as that done by other agricultural or labouring slaves. The saving required to purchase and maintain a slave is a key reason why Roman soldiers, who often married their own freed slaves, tended to marry later in life.<sup>151</sup> One way that soldiers might be able to afford slaves earlier in life was to purchase them jointly with other soldiers, as is attested in the *Digest*.<sup>152</sup>

Phang writes that assessing the sex ratio of soldiers' slaves is even more difficult than in civilian society, but believes the evidence suggests that many were males – most of the *Digest* passages relating to soldiers' slaves concern males, and heavy labour may have been thought more suitable to males.<sup>153</sup> However, it seems likely that the average infantryman would struggle to purchase more than one slave during his service, and that slave was often intended to become a wife. I propose, then, that the sex ratio looked like

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<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-8.

<sup>149</sup> *SB* III 6304.

<sup>150</sup> *IDR* 1 38.

<sup>151</sup> Phang (2001), 181-90 on economic reasons for soldiers to delay marriage; 190-5 on soldiers marrying freed slaves.

<sup>152</sup> *D.* 45.3.18.

<sup>153</sup> Phang (2001), 271.

this: the slaves and freed slaves of most ordinary *milites* were female (a female slave or ‘wife’ could, after all, perform many of the menial tasks for a soldier which a male slave would); the slaves owned by the army for tasks such as tending the baggage train and engaging in combat support duties were mostly or exclusively male; the slaves of wealthier soldiers and officers, who could afford multiple slaves, were mixed.

Army units frequently involved in warfare may not have had to purchase many slaves at all; capture in war was a key source of slaves for the Roman empire.<sup>154</sup> Slaves were not seized only in large-scale wars or city captures; in the border raiding in which frontier armies were engaged, attacks upon communities and the seizure of their people as slaves was an important feature, as in Germanicus’ raid against the Chatti (‘all the helpless from age or sex were at once captured or slaughtered’).<sup>155</sup> Keith Bradley points to a third century inscription by the governor of Mauretania, *ob prostratam gentem Bavarum Mesegneitisium praedasque omnes ac familias eorum abductas* (‘to commemorate the conquest of the tribe of the Bavares Mesegneitises and the capture of their families along with all the booty’), as an example of the sort of warfare in the Principate which is simply unknown to us except when inscriptions are fortunate enough to survive.<sup>156</sup>

Archaeological evidence corroborates the importance of the military to the slave supply. Slave chains have been found at military sites – a chain allowing six individuals to be linked together, held by the neck, was found at Neuss,<sup>157</sup> and two more examples were found at Caerleon.<sup>158</sup> One of the most famous depictions of bound slaves comes from the base of a column from the *principia* of the legionary base at Mainz;<sup>159</sup> another column

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<sup>154</sup> Bradley (2004), arguing that capture in war as a source of slaves during the Principate has been underestimated.

<sup>155</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 1.56: *sed Chattis adeo improvisus advenit, ut quod imbecillum aetate ac sexu statim captum aut trucidatum sit.*

<sup>156</sup> Bradley (2004), 301-2; *CIL VIII*, 21486.

<sup>157</sup> Simpson (2000), 99-100, 161.

<sup>158</sup> Evans (2000), 402.

<sup>159</sup> Thompson (1993), 78-81.

base actually depicts a legionary with the slave chain (*ἀλυσίς*) which Josephus describes legionaries carrying.<sup>160</sup> In his extensive study of slave shackles, Hugh Thompson suggests that the preponderance of Roman types on the limes indicates the role of the army in seizing slaves from hostile peoples.<sup>161</sup> At least on the limes, then, many of the army's slaves would have been seized by the army itself, and military units could acquire as many *calones* as necessary.

To summarise the issue of numbers: for a legionary on ordinary pay, the cost of purchasing and maintaining a slave makes it likely that only those who had served for many years could afford a slave, and these were usually female slaves intended for marriage. Officers and junior officers were financially capable of having several slaves. There were also the slaves of non-military personnel – at Chester, a man named Pompeius Optatus set up a tomb for his slaves Atilianus and Antiatilianus, aged 10, and Protus, aged 12.<sup>162</sup> Slaves themselves, of course, might also 'own' their own slaves, *vicarii*, and it is entirely plausible to imagine the literate slaves of officers (see below) doing so.

As for army slaves, there were no ideological reasons to keep their numbers low; logistical concerns would probably be the main reason to limit them, although as we shall see below, they actually played a key role in maintaining logistical efficiency. Literary references to overall numbers of camp followers provide no information whatsoever, with Tacitus' claim that *calones* and *lixae* could exceed the soldiers just as likely to indicate that this was highly unusual (if it happened at all). That said, Josephus, who has a more positive view of army slaves than Tacitus, also describes them as numerous

(*παμπληθεῖς*).<sup>163</sup> Fewer probably attended an army on campaign than at its permanent base,

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<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 104-5; Jos. *BJ*. 3.93.

<sup>161</sup> Thompson (1993).

<sup>162</sup> *RIB* 560. Optatus was possibly a merchant, while the deaths of three young slaves around the same time suggests disease or accident: Mason (2012), 111.

<sup>163</sup> Jos. *BJ*. 3.69; Josephus here uses the term *θεράποντες*.

but in either case, large numbers were certainly present – perhaps, with all types of slaves and servants added together, their number really did approach that of the soldiers themselves. It is extraordinary to consider that a legion was accompanied by a multitude of enslaved people whose numbers – let alone their experiences – can be understood so dimly today.

What did military slaves do, and what were their lives like? Here archaeological evidence offers little help – as is generally the case in the study of Roman slavery. Despite the urging of scholars such as Jane Webster for archaeologists to do more to uncover the material remains of ancient slave life, evidence simply does not survive to answer many basic questions,<sup>164</sup> and even scholars who have attempted to advance the study of Roman slavery through material remains, such as Michele George, readily admit the general scarcity of evidence.<sup>165</sup> Simon James, the most constant advocate for the study of soldiers' dependents in the field of Roman military archaeology, says very little on the subject when discussing the extended military community in his recent book on Dura-Europus.<sup>166</sup> The problems inherent to the archaeological study of slavery – the slave's relative lack of agency and resources to leave a legacy in the physical record, and the difficulty of distinguishing enslaved individuals in the material record – are equally if not more difficult in the military context.<sup>167</sup>

With many functions, we can only assume that slaves were sometimes involved; Kampen writes, for example, that 'it is hard not to imagine slave workers' at the communal ovens.<sup>168</sup> Food preparation – a task which, without doubt, we should at least admit the

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<sup>164</sup> Webster (2008).

<sup>165</sup> E.g. George (2010), 156: 'The paucity of archaeological evidence is real; however, as I have argued here, there is more there than is sometimes imagined.' Cf. Joshel and Petersen (2014), 4-6.

<sup>166</sup> James (2019), 250-5.

<sup>167</sup> George (2013), 4.

<sup>168</sup> Kampen (2013), 190.

probability of slaves being involved in – provides a good example of how the presence of slaves in the army has been completely ignored by scholars. Davies speculated that perhaps soldiers who were not given work assignments for a given day would be given the task of preparing food for their working colleagues,<sup>169</sup> while Maureen Carroll wrote a detailed discussion on the preparation and consumption of food in the army which does not once mention slave labour.<sup>170</sup> Flour needed to be produced through many hours of grinding, either using hand mills or larger centurial mills; ovens had to be fired up and constantly stoked; the bread had to be baked – and this was just for the most basic foodstuff. This is not a minor point: Carroll argues in her article that communal food preparation is a task which would have fostered close ties between members of a *contubernium*. If we suppose, however, that most of the preparatory labour was in fact undertaken by slaves, we are left with one fewer communal task to foster small-group bonding.

However, we should be cautious in making assumptions about what sort of work was deemed appropriate for slaves but not soldiers. Although milling grain was stereotypically servile labour, an anecdote in which Caracalla made a point of grinding his own grain on campaign (as well as bridging streams, building ramparts, and digging ditches) suggests that this was appropriate for soldiers, even if some were able to delegate it to slaves.<sup>171</sup> Phang explores in depth how military labour often resembled slave labour,<sup>172</sup> and as described in chapter 5, soldiers were often forced to perform repetitive and sometimes materially useless work *adversus otium*.<sup>173</sup> Joshel and Petersen use the phrase ‘choreography of slave movement’ to describe the way that slave owners controlled

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<sup>169</sup> Davies (1989), 53.

<sup>170</sup> Carroll (2005).

<sup>171</sup> Herod. 4.7.4-5; Phang (2005), 212-3.

<sup>172</sup> Phang (2005).

<sup>173</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 1.35.

their slaves, identifying three key aspects: ‘the constraint of slaves to prescribed paths’, ‘the control of timing’, and ‘the scripting of gestures and motions of slaves at their jobs’.<sup>174</sup> Much of this could apply equally to military life.

Fortunately, there are sources for other functions. As we might expect, most tasks in which slaves were involved were in some way logistical. On campaign, looking after the baggage and animals was one of the slaves’ key functions.<sup>175</sup> Donkey drivers are frequently referred to in the ostraca,<sup>176</sup> and at least some of these were slaves, as in *O.Did.* 447, which refers to the slave donkey driver Serapion (Σεραπίωνος παιδὸς ὠνηλάτου). *Galearii* are also used to transport letters in the Didymoi ostraca: in *O.Did.* 318, Iulius states that he has received four letters ‘through the *galearius* at Didymoi’ (γαλεαρίου τοῦ ἐν Διδύμοις) – the slave is identified by the base at which he serves, not the individual to which he was attached, and so was possibly an army-owned slave.<sup>177</sup> Wesch-Klein suggests that as *canabae* developed at larger bases, many of the services provided to soldiers by slaves would have been taken over by the inhabitants of the *canabae*.<sup>178</sup> Both Caesar and Tacitus refer to *calones* being sent some distance from the army in order to procure corn.<sup>179</sup>

Slaves also had important military functions. This has been slightly overstated by modern scholars accepting the evidence of Vegetius and Josephus too uncritically; James, for example, describes them as ‘trained paramilitaries’.<sup>180</sup> Josephus does claim that the slaves were ‘trained in war along with the rest, and ought not be distinguished from the

<sup>174</sup> Joshel and Petersen (2014), 10.

<sup>175</sup> Phang (2008), 235.

<sup>176</sup> *O. Did.* 453, 461.

<sup>177</sup> Also *O. Did.* 319 (ἔπεμψά σοι ἐπιστολάς τέσσαρες διὰ τοῦ γαλεαρίου τοῦ ἐκίθεν ἀπὸ Διδύμων καὶ διὰ Κορνηλίου γαλεαρίου).

<sup>178</sup> Wesch-Klein (1998), 113.

<sup>179</sup> Caes. *BC.* 1.52: *calones ad longinquoires civitates dimittebat*; Tac. *Hist.* 3.20: *lixas calonesque cum recentissimis equitum Bedriacum mittit, copias ceteraque usui adlaturos*.

<sup>180</sup> James (2018), 40.

fighting men' (*συνάσκησιν πολεμικὴν οὐκ ἂν ἀποτάσσοιντο τοῦ μαχίμου*).<sup>181</sup> Like the rest of Josephus' description of the Roman army, this passage is certainly exaggerated; Welwei doubts, moreover, that this means the non-soldiers participated in weapons exercises, but rather refers to exercise marches and manoeuvres.<sup>182</sup> Although it cannot be proved that slaves were not included in the former, it makes perfect sense for them to have participated in the latter – non-combatant personnel needed to keep up with an army on the march.

Vegetius claims that slaves were taught to swim, while able and experienced slaves were put in charge of up to 200 pack-animals and other slaves, with their own standards.<sup>183</sup> Speidel claims that this description could apply to all five centuries of the empire.<sup>184</sup> On the contrary, as I argued in chapter 5, Vegetius' claims are best characterised as 'prescriptions in the guise of descriptions': his own recommendations, rather than accurate descriptions of military organisation in preceding centuries. A reformer seeking to improve military efficiency, it seems to me, might immediately look to put the slaves to greater use by improving their organisation; Vegetius' comments are therefore just as likely to indicate that slaves were in fact disorganised and under-used, at least in his own day.

Rouland, however, extrapolates a great deal of autonomy for the slaves based on this passage of Vegetius, thinking that 'est... difficile de croire... les esclaves soient restés totalement inactifs au cours des batailles et que ce découpage n'ait servi qu'à des fins défensives'.<sup>185</sup> Although it is surely the case that slaves made military contributions more often than our sources were willing or interested to record, the evidence clearly shows that resorting to the slaves and baggage handlers as combatants was a matter of last resort. Contrary to modern scholars who claim that servants were intended to act as guards for the

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<sup>181</sup> Jos. *BJ*. 3.69.

<sup>182</sup> Welwei (1988), 81-2.

<sup>183</sup> Veg. *Mil.* 1.10; 3.6.

<sup>184</sup> Speidel (1989), 243.

<sup>185</sup> Rouland (1977), 35-6.

camp and baggage,<sup>186</sup> the sources present instances of their successful use in combat as extraordinary. Dio's description of a battle involving Macrinus near Nisbis – 'the finest description of the fighting role of the servants', according to Speidel – states that Macrinus came close to losing his camp, 'but the armour-bearers and baggage-carriers who were present (*οἱ τε ὑπασπισταὶ καὶ οἱ σκευοφόροι οἱ παρατυχόντες*) saved it; for in their confidence they charged out against the oncoming barbarians, and the very unexpectedness of their opposition aided them, causing them to seem to be armed soldiers rather than helpers.'<sup>187</sup> Here the opposition of the baggage carriers is presented as a surprising intervention, and the phrase *οἱ παρατυχόντες* would seem to convey that their presence was a piece of good fortune rather than part of a plan.

At Thapsus, the townspeople attempted to attack Caesar's camp while battle raged, but were repelled by the servants and slaves (*servitiis puerisque*) in the camp, who used stones and pila (*lapidibus pilisque*).<sup>188</sup> The use of stones (and perhaps the fact that the author of the *African War* felt the need to describe what the slaves and servants used to repel the enemy) suggests a desperate last-ditch defence rather than a properly armed and prepared garrison. In Caesar's description of the Sambre, the *calones* leave the camp to collect plunder, only to flee altogether when they subsequently see enemies enter the camp.<sup>189</sup> They later engage these enemies only when they become visibly panicked. Caesar mentions that he had held legionaries back to protect the baggage; it seems most likely that the *calones*, then, were put in the camp to keep them sequestered, not to act as any sort of last reserve. In sum, then, the evidence suggests that the use of slaves and other non-

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<sup>186</sup> E.g. Speidel (1989), 245: 'Clearly, these servants were not only armed, but trained and organized for fighting. Their role was to guard the camp and to be a last reserve'; Roth (1999), 109: 'The defensive function of military servants was not only an emergency measure, as some claim, but was routine.'

<sup>187</sup> Dio 79.26.5-6: *ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν οἱ τε ὑπασπισταὶ καὶ οἱ σκευοφόροι οἱ παρατυχόντες διεσώσαντο· θρασυόμενοι γὰρ προεξῆζαν ἐς τοὺς βαρβάρους ἐπεκδραμόντες· τό τε γὰρ ἀνέλπιστον τῆς ἀντιτάξεως ὠφέλησεν αὐτούς, καὶ δὴ στρατιῶταί τινες ὠπλισμένοι ἀλλ' οὐχ ὑπηρεταὶ ἔδοξαν εἶναι.*

<sup>188</sup> *Bell. Afr.* 85.

<sup>189</sup> *Caes. BG.* 2.24-7.

soldiers to defend against enemies was not a regular procedure, and certainly there is no evidence to suggest that in battle they possessed, as Rouland claims, ‘une certaine liberté de manoeuvres’.<sup>190</sup> Rouland’s argument that the grooms of cavalymen would be likely to contribute in combat while they assisted their masters is more plausible.<sup>191</sup>

However, although the fighting role of slaves has been overestimated, little attention has been paid to their other contributions to military operations which can be gleaned from the sources. The *Spanish War* mentions that a Pompeian native legion used slaves (*servi*) as scouts – the Caesarians captured three of them, along with one infantryman.<sup>192</sup> The infantryman was beheaded while the slaves were crucified. We have no way to know how common this use of slaves was, but it is interesting to consider that they were trusted for such a mission – and with only one soldier, whom the three could presumably overpower, to watch over them. We do hear elsewhere of slaves deserting and passing on intelligence.<sup>193</sup> The *Spanish War* also mentions a *puer* tasked with watching over a ballista.<sup>194</sup>

The *Alexandrian War* records that Caesar ordered the slaves to bring out material for a rampart, so that the soldiers would not have to cease their work on the fortifications.<sup>195</sup> The passage seems to suggest, however, that this too was exceptional: the enemy were tricked into thinking that the slaves carrying the material were in fact soldiers, ‘as if they were going about their daily work (*more operis cotidiani*)’ – implying that this sort of activity was not usual for slaves; hence why the author explains that they were set to the task in order that the legions could work uninterrupted and erect the rampart

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<sup>190</sup> Rouland (1977), 35-6.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 36-7; Speidel (1989), 244.

<sup>192</sup> *Bell. Hisp.* 20.

<sup>193</sup> *Bell. Hisp.* 27.

<sup>194</sup> *Bell. Hisp.* 13. The author claims that a Caesarian artillery piece demolished a Pompeian tower containing this slave and five crewmen who operated the ballista; how he could have known the identities of the victims I do not know.

<sup>195</sup> *Bell. Alex.* 73-4.

faster.<sup>196</sup> It is interesting to consider that these mentions of slaves involved in military operations come from the pseudo-Caesarian texts which seem to have been written by lower-ranking individuals and are generally less reserved about mentioning the sorts of details which Caesar himself omits.

To what extent can slaves and servants be considered part of the military community, and did they identify as such? James believes so: he writes that *calones* and *lixae* ‘were de facto part of the armies, and took their sense of identity from their ties with the soldiers’.<sup>197</sup> However, he does not argue in support of this claim; the conclusion seems to rest on his statement that *calones* and *lixae* fulfilled important military functions. I agree that slaves and servants were integral to military efficiency, but this does not mean that they were socially integrated. In civilian society, slaves’ work was equally crucial – slaves laboured, lived and slept in the most intimate areas of their masters’ houses, and they were present in the most intimate moments of their masters’ lives – but none of this impeded the masters from brutalising slaves or simply acting as if they were invisible.<sup>198</sup>

Our default supposition should be that military slaves were socially excluded. There is no doubt that the line between slave and soldier was sharply drawn: slaves, as discussed previously, were ordinarily banned from army service.<sup>199</sup> Though they were sometimes enrolled in emergencies, such as after the Varian disaster, they were kept separate from the rest of the soldiers: Suetonius notes that Augustus made sure not to mix them with other soldiers, and armed them differently (whatever that means).<sup>200</sup> The ban on

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<sup>196</sup> *Bell. Alex.* 73: *Huc omnem comportatum aggerem ex castris per servitia aggeri iussit, ne quis ab opere miles discederet.*

<sup>197</sup> James (2019), 252.

<sup>198</sup> Joshel and Petersen (2014), 9: ‘In effect, slave-holders tried to make particular slaves present and others absent both aurally and visually.’

<sup>199</sup> *D.* 49.16.11: *ab omni militia servi prohibentur: alioquim capite puniuntur.*

<sup>200</sup> *Suet. Aug.* 25: *sub priore uexillo habuit, neque aut commixtos cum ingenuis aut eodem modo armatos*; cf. *Dio* 55.31.1 (the Illyrian revolt); *HA Marcus* 21.6-7 (the Marcomannic war). See Rouland (1977), esp. 44-65; Welwei (1988).

slaves serving seems to have been strictly enforced (in contrast to regulations such as the citizenship requirement which were readily overlooked): as discussed in the introduction, a papyrus from the Fayoum contains the declaration of the *optio* Titus Flavius Longus that he was a freeborn Roman citizen,<sup>201</sup> while letters between Pliny and Trajan reveal the consternation that resulted from the discovery of two slaves within a batch of recruits, with the emperor demanding punishment for whomever was responsible.<sup>202</sup>

There is only a little evidence with which to pursue a more detailed discussion of identity and social inclusion; among the military tombstone evidence, for instance, Natalie Kampen could find only two examples of dependants being portrayed with an identifying inscription: the famous stela of Marcus Caelius with his *liberti* Thiaminus and Privatus, and a stela belonging to a Raetian auxiliary named Firmus which includes a small figure carrying a sack, labelled *Fuscus servus*.<sup>203</sup> Besides these, all other depictions of dependents are ‘utterly stereotypic’, such as the rider’s attendant or servant at a banquet. Such depictions predominantly feature on the tombstones of cavalymen – both because the cavalymen were wealthier and as a status symbol, argues Haynes.<sup>204</sup> Overall, as far as we can tell from the surviving evidence, few soldiers commemorated their slaves and few military slaves commemorated their masters. We should be wary of making any conclusions given the problems of the evidence, though the lack of commemoration of military slaves does stand in contrast to house slaves (*vernae*), who, Wierschowksi suggests, ‘sicher engere und persönlichere Beziehungen zu ihren Herren hatten’.<sup>205</sup> However, it seems just as reasonable to conclude that there were fewer military slaves with the financial means to leave lasting commemorations than *vernae*.

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<sup>201</sup> *CPL* 102.

<sup>202</sup> Plin. *Ep.* 10.29-30.

<sup>203</sup> Kampen (2013); stela of Firmus: Rinaldi Tufi (1988), 26-7.

<sup>204</sup> Haynes (2013), 266.

<sup>205</sup> Wierschowksi (1984), 66.

We have used inscriptional evidence to examine the ways that soldiers identified with their units, and there is some evidence for *lixae* identifying themselves with units to which they were attached. Speidel discusses an inscription which refers to *M(arcus) Titius lixa coh(ortis) / III Thracum Syriac(ae)*.<sup>206</sup> He argues that *lixa* here refers to the man's function, not his name (hence why no other function such as *miles* or *eques* is present). Another inscription refers to a *lixo ex cohorte XII*.<sup>207</sup> The term *lixa*, as discussed, can refer to free as well as unfree individuals, and we cannot assume the status of either of these individuals. It would be strange, however, for these *lixae* to be mere 'sutlers' following their units around; more likely they had been permanently employed (or enslaved) by their units. Of course, even if we were to find a tombstone which we could definitely attribute to an army slave who died while in service, and the inscription listed him as a slave of a particular unit, this would not constitute evidence for the slave's own idea of his identity; only that of his commemorators. Perhaps slaves wore unit identifiers, as the servants of British regiments in India sometimes did.<sup>208</sup>

The Didymoi ostraca occasionally mention slaves, reminding us of their involvement in life at the base and possible social contact. Slaves belonging to discharged soldiers were also part of life at the base, along with their retired masters: *O.Did.* 353 is a letter which instructs a soldier to give a cloak to Chresimos, the slave of Dexter the discharged soldier. The cloak was probably intended for Dexter himself, though we cannot rule out that Chresimos had purchased the item for himself – perhaps slaves, at least those with a degree of independence, were integrated into the networks of exchange between military installations not just as couriers, but as recipients and dealers in their own right.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> Speidel (1980); *AE* 1990, 1012.

<sup>207</sup> *AE* 1936, 25 (the 'o' spelling present in the text).

<sup>208</sup> Forty and Forty (1979), 50: a photograph c. 1895, in which Earl David Airlie poses with two of his servants, who are crouched down on the ground, with 10th Hussar cap badges on their turbans.

<sup>209</sup> See the next chapter for further discussion of these networks.

However, slaves are very rarely referred to among the ostraca, nor do slaves themselves write these letters. There were perhaps fewer literate slaves than soldiers, but since many of the soldiers' letters were dictated by illiterate men to their literate comrades, lack of literacy would not suffice to explain the absence of slaves' letters. The exchange of goods, letters, and information between outposted soldiers was a key part of military life in which slaves and servants – perhaps surprisingly – played an apparently limited role. Although there is a reference to a soldier receiving letters through 'the *galearius* at Didymoi' (*O.Did.* 318), exchanges of letters and goods were typically conducted through the soldiers themselves, especially riders. This is a good indication of the social exclusion of slaves, who, so far as we can tell, are not greeted in the letters either (horses, on the other hand, often are). If indeed the *galearius ἐν Διδύμοις* was attached to a specific base, and there were others stationed likewise, there is one interesting implication: at these small bases where, as I explore in the next chapter, there was a high turnover of soldiers, the slaves may have been the only ones providing any continuity of personnel. They would be the ones who understood how things worked, and how to deal with local conditions and geography. If they were integrated into the social fabric of the site along with the soldiers, however, this has not been recorded in our textual evidence.

Though one hesitates to speculate on such matters, it may be that slaves were treated better on campaign than in times of peace – when faced with an enemy army, the risk of desertion would be greater, small acts of slave resistance more damaging, and the need for efficient labour more pressing. Then again, given the harshness of the discipline that soldiers faced, the slaves could equally have been controlled through a system of threats and punishments even more severe than elsewhere in the Roman world. However, given that on campaign, it would be more difficult to constrain slaves spatially – and we

have evidence for their being dispersed in actions such as foraging<sup>210</sup> – control through pure force would be especially difficult. Tacitus describes how the Batavians counted on the ‘wavering loyalty of the slaves’ (*fluxa servitiorum fides*) when attacking Vetera, indicating that Rome’s enemies were aware that the large slave corps could be a weakness for the army.<sup>211</sup>

The slaves of officers and commanders are another matter. Among the Vindolanda tablets we have evidence for freedmen and slaves of officers, though it is not absolutely certain that slaves are referred to in all cases.<sup>212</sup> In the most recently published Vindolanda tablets, we also see Julius Verecundus, prefect of the First Cohort of Tungrians, writing to his slave Audax (referred to as *servus*) about the transport of vegetables.<sup>213</sup> There is correspondence possibly between two slaves,<sup>214</sup> and one letter, concerning arrangements for the Saturnalia, may contain something quite remarkable: a *cornicularius* called Severus writing to a slave, Candidus, and referring to him with the word *frater*.<sup>215</sup> It should be noted that the reading of *corniclario* is not certain: when the text was originally published in the second *Tabulae Vindolandenses* volume, *seruo* was preferred;<sup>216</sup> only in the appendix to volume III was *corniclario* adopted, with the authors stating that ‘it is very interesting indeed that a soldier of this rank should write to a slave addressing him as *frater*’;<sup>217</sup> whereas in volume II this had been considered ‘inconceivable’. If we accept that this was a *cornicularius* addressing a slave as *frater*, and that this was more than a commonly used term thrown into a letter, we could indeed have an exceptional piece of

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<sup>210</sup> E.g. Caes. *BG.* 7.20.8-9.

<sup>211</sup> Tac. *Hist.* 4.23.8.

<sup>212</sup> Uncertain or uninformative: *Tab. Vindol.* II. 255: *puerorum meorum* – slaves or soldiers? Likewise *Tab. Vindol.* 642, discussed in Bowman and Thomas (2003), 95. *Tab. Vindol.* II. 302: *Verecundi* (possibly indicating a slave of Verecundus in the now-vacant space); *Tab. Vindol.* II. 303: *seru*; *Tab. Vindol.* II. 322: *seruoru[m]*; *Tab. Vindol.* III. 616, possibly instructions from Cerialis to his slaves.

<sup>213</sup> *Tab. Vindol.* IV. 890.

<sup>214</sup> *Tab. Vindol.* II. 347: certainly the sender, Rhenus, describes himself as *servus*.

<sup>215</sup> Bowman (2003), 52.

<sup>216</sup> Bowman and Thomas (1994), 278.

<sup>217</sup> Bowman and Thomas (2003), 159.

evidence for solidarity and comradeship between soldiers and slaves in the army. However, it should be noted that the slave Candidus belonged to the prefect Cerialis, and was evidently a literate man with a good deal of responsibility, intimately involved in the running of the fort. In terms of authority and importance, Severus and Candidus may well have been roughly equal. Thus this is not a piece of evidence from which we could generalise when thinking about foot soldiers and their relationships with baggage handlers, for example. Nonetheless, if the reading is correct, it illustrates in the military context a fact which is well-known from wider Roman society: enslavement was only one factor in determining social status, and slaves could occupy positions of parity or even power over free men.

Alternatively, if this were a piece of communication between two slaves, such fraternal feelings between slaves of similar status would not be surprising, and at Halton Chesters we find the tombstone of a slave buried by a servile burial association (*collegium conservorum*).<sup>218</sup> The formation of such an association implies the presence of a considerable number of slaves, though again we ought to ask what sort of slave was able to gain entry to the association – presumably ones with an independent income which they could contribute to the burial fund, and so the slaves of officers rather than ordinary soldiers. Whether there was any sort of common feeling among lower-status slaves, and whether there was any sort of moral or material solidarity as a result, we can only guess at (Rouland briefly discussed this in terms of ‘class consciousness’).<sup>219</sup>

We ought to recognise that, just as elsewhere in Roman society, there was a complex hierarchy among slaves and servants, from the literate slaves of officers to muleteers who slept among the animals. Not all servants were slaves, or even of low

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<sup>218</sup> *RIB* 1436.

<sup>219</sup> Rouland (1977), 40-44. James (2011), 192 claims that soldiers’ slaves ‘seem to have developed their own esprit de corps’, but the evidence is lacking.

status: James suggests that some *calones* might be aspiring soldiers, learning the job while waiting for an opportunity to sign on.<sup>220</sup> We may indeed have an example of a similar individual: a *lixa*, Flavinus, buried along with his father, the legionary Flavos.<sup>221</sup> Welwei suggests that this son of a legionary identified as a *lixa* may have aimed to become a soldier, but was temporarily serving his father.<sup>222</sup> One thinks similarly of the page in early modern Europe: as Laurence Bergreen writes of the pages on Magellan's voyage, some had been 'virtually kidnapped from the quays of Seville... treated harshly, exploited shamelessly, deprived of adequate pay, and occasionally made the victims of sexual predators among older crew members', while 'another class of page lived a very different life, privileged and relatively free of demand, under the protection of officers'.<sup>223</sup>

Depressingly, even if we were to have more evidence about army slaves, it would probably illuminate only the higher-status ones; as Kampen says, the slaves and freedmen identified in inscriptions by their owners were not *calones* or oven-stokers, but those who were close to their owners.<sup>224</sup> However, there is one predominantly slave group whose experiences and relationships with soldiers we do have some interesting evidence for: prostitutes. This group is discussed at length in the following section.

### Prostitutes

The only type of slave in the military milieu whose experiences can be illuminated by some evidence is the prostitute. Thanks to the ostraca from the eastern desert bases, we

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<sup>220</sup> James (2019), 252.

<sup>221</sup> *CIL VIII*, 8732: [Au]relius T(iti) f(ilius) Gal(eria) [Fl]avos Cal(agurri) mil(es) leg(ionis) X Gem(inae) ann(orum) XL stip(endiorum) XVIII et M(arcus) Aurelius T(iti) f(ilius) Gal(eria) Festus Calag(urri) ann(orum) XXXVIII stip(endiorum) XVII et Aurelius Flavi f(ilius) Flavinus lixa ann(orum) XVIII hic siti sunt s(it) v(obis) t(erra) l(evis) h(eres) f(aciendum) c(uravit).

<sup>222</sup> Welwei (1988), 86.

<sup>223</sup> Bergreen (2003), 109-10.

<sup>224</sup> Kampen (2013), 191-2.

have the opportunity here to discuss the organisation, and more importantly the lived experience, of prostitution at an army base. For once, the quantity of evidence in the military sphere is greater than that from the rest of the Roman world; whereas the elite literary sources give few insights into ‘life as it looked from within the sex-trade’, concerned as they are with painting pimps and prostitutes as the antithesis of the honourable citizen, from the military sphere we possess the words of pimps, clients, and possibly even prostitutes themselves.<sup>225</sup> The insights in this chapter not only cast light on a neglected and barely-studied area of military life, but also provide crucial evidence for aspects of prostitution in the Roman world more generally, the study of which has otherwise relied on educated assumptions, comparative evidence, or literary evidence of uncertain reliability or generalisability.

Although prostitution has not been subject to extensive study in the military context, there has been plenty of work on prostitution elsewhere in the Roman world in the last few decades.<sup>226</sup> Some general characteristics of Roman prostitution which have emerged from this work are worth mentioning. First, most prostitutes (so far as we can tell) were slaves.<sup>227</sup> This immediately brings us to a terminological issue: for some, the term prostitute implies that the person has chosen to work as such, and the term is therefore inappropriate for a sex slave with no personal or economic independence (the term ‘sex slave’ itself is a pleonasm in a culture where all slaves were sexually available; see below).<sup>228</sup> In modern international law, the term ‘forced prostitution’ has been replaced with ‘sexual slavery’, because the former term ‘obscures the terrible gravity of the crime, suggests a level of voluntarism, and stigmatizes its victims as immoral or “used goods”’.<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Ashede (2016), 932.

<sup>226</sup> McGinn (2004) is the best and most comprehensive (and thoroughly footnoted); see also McGinn (1998); Stumpp (1998); Flemming (1999); Ashede (2016). Harper (2011), 304-14 on late antiquity.

<sup>227</sup> Flemming (1999), 41; McGinn (2004), 55-71.

<sup>228</sup> Marshall (2015), 125; McGinn (1998), 17-18 on the problems of defining prostitution.

<sup>229</sup> Argibay (2003), 386-7.

These are important points, but I believe the concept of a slave prostitute remains useful in ancient history to describe a slave forced, as their primary form of work, to engage in sex for the economic benefit of their master, so long as we use the term without any associations of voluntarism or moral stigma. Feminist studies of ancient prostitution have successfully used the term in such a way; Rebecca Flemming, for example, who determines to write about female prostitution in the Roman world from the perspective of the women rather than the male-authored literary sources, recognises that prostitutes were predominantly slaves, and uses the term prostitute.<sup>230</sup>

For the Romans, slaves were entirely sexually accessible to their masters, and to anyone whom their masters permitted to have sex with them.<sup>231</sup> As Williams says, ‘from the earliest of times it seems to have been understood that among the services that Roman men might expect their slaves to perform was the satisfaction of their sexual desires’.<sup>232</sup> Plutarch even recommends that men with particularly dissolute sexual desires respect their wives by fulfilling their lusts with slaves instead.<sup>233</sup> Slaves were seen as property, or as tools, possessing no autonomy of their own;<sup>234</sup> the very idea that a slave could be raped (as we understand the term) would perplex a Roman – slaves were counted among those *in quas stuprum non committitur* – ‘against whom sexual offences cannot be committed’.<sup>235</sup> ‘*Inpudicitia* (lack of sexual virtue) is a crime for the freeborn, a necessity for the slave, and a duty for the freedman’, as Haterius, quoted in Seneca’s *Controversiae*, states, referring to a slave being the concubine of a master.<sup>236</sup> Rape was not simply a by-product of the slave’s vulnerability: as Lenski puts it, ‘Sexual violence was... part and parcel of a larger system

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<sup>230</sup> Flemming (1999).

<sup>231</sup> Green (2015).

<sup>232</sup> Williams 1999: 30; Witzke 2016: 260-4 on female slaves specifically.

<sup>233</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 140B.

<sup>234</sup> Lenski (2013).

<sup>235</sup> *D.* 25.7.1.

<sup>236</sup> Sen. *Cont.* 4, pref. 10.

rooted in the forceful domination of the slave's body'; it was integral to defining slavery, and to reifying the slave's subjugation.<sup>237</sup>

There were thus no moral or legal obstacles to a Roman master prostituting his slaves, i.e. making them sexually available to others in exchange for money. A covenant could be put in place when a slave was sold that the slave would not be used as a prostitute (*ne serva prostituatur*); the implication is that by default, a slave could be prostituted by their master.<sup>238</sup> In fact, not only slaves, but other women under male authority – wives and daughters – could be compelled to work as prostitutes; as McGinn summarises: 'In a sense, prostitution functioned as just another form of exploitation of women's labor, one of a series of unprestigious jobs in which slaves worked for their masters, daughters their fathers, and wives their husbands. In this way, prostitution reflected women's participation in the economy as a whole, with selling sex only one in a series of quasi-domestic responsibilities that were foisted upon women.'<sup>239</sup>

Of course, there were also free prostitutes who might choose to earn money by selling sex. Possibly, ostraca showing such women interacting directly with authorities indicates that they could even be quite independent.<sup>240</sup> However, in terms of real freedom and oppression, the difference between slave and free prostitutes was a spectrum rather than a binary: a nominally free prostitute who was economically destitute and indebted to their pimp would live a life in conditions comparable to those of any slave.<sup>241</sup> The few details we have about the lives and experiences of prostitutes (and few they are) reinforce precisely what one would expect in a patriarchal, slaveholding society: the business was

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<sup>237</sup> Lenski (2016), 281-2.

<sup>238</sup> McGinn (1998), 288-319.

<sup>239</sup> McGinn (2004), 73.

<sup>240</sup> Flemming (1999), 46.

<sup>241</sup> McGinn (1998), 266: 'many prostitutes, whether slave or free, were not allowed to decide how much to charge, how hard to work, or whether or not to remain a prostitute'. See Flemming (1999), 46-50 on the difficulty of ranking different kinds of prostitutes based on their supposed level of autonomy.

violent, dangerous, and cruel.<sup>242</sup> The fact that those involved with prostitution were *infames*, and thus less protected by the law, only heightened the danger in a highly unregulated area of Roman life.<sup>243</sup> Some prostitutes were prisoners in their brothels, not allowed to leave the premises.<sup>244</sup>

Where one finds an army, one finds prostitutes. Although there is little literary evidence for soldiers' use of prostitutes, their presence has often been assumed, with some scholars suggesting that the army would organise prostitution for the soldiers.<sup>245</sup> The most interesting piece of evidence for military prostitution was, for a long time, building G5 at Dura-Europus.<sup>246</sup> In this building was a list of entertainers, including 33 women. Some sort of army involvement is suggested by the mentions of an *optio* and *σταθμοῦχος*, possibly indicating military ownership of the building.<sup>247</sup> Pollard believes that the entertainers were army-owned slaves.<sup>248</sup> However, in the original excavation report, Immerwahr's conclusions were rather more cautious: 'It seems clear that, in spite of the strong possibility that prostitution was practised in our group, it is not an organized brothel of the kind known from Greece and Italy.'<sup>249</sup> He was also appropriately hesitant about suggesting military supervision on the basis that the names of an *optio* and *σταθμοῦχος* were present, or that the women could be classified as prostitutes at all: 'It is... difficult to decide whether they were performers or mere prostitutes. In actual fact, the combination was common in antiquity.'<sup>250</sup> Some modern scholars have accepted that the women were prostitutes servicing soldiers, but doubted that the military authorities would be involved

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<sup>242</sup> McGinn (2004), 84-93.

<sup>243</sup> Ashede (2016), 935-8.

<sup>244</sup> McGinn (2004), 37.

<sup>245</sup> Phang (2001), 244-51; Wesch-Klein (1998), 115 n. 79.

<sup>246</sup> Immerwahr (1944); Pollard (2000), 53-4, 188; McGinn (2004), 223-5; Baird (2012), 196-200.

<sup>247</sup> Immerwahr (1994), 236.

<sup>248</sup> Pollard (2000), 188.

<sup>249</sup> Immerwahr (1944), 261.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*, 257.

in organising them.<sup>251</sup>

Two women mentioned among the Vindonissa tablets could conceivably have practised prostitution. One of the tablets reads *Dabis Belic(a)e, con{c}t{o}ra balneu(m)* ('Give this to Belica, opposite the baths').<sup>252</sup> Belica seems to have worked and maybe lived in a building opposite the baths, where gaming equipment, dice, and kitchen utensils have been found.<sup>253</sup> Hence Belica is often referred to as an innkeeper or barmaid, and Allison refers to her establishment as 'a tavern, or perhaps even a brothel'.<sup>254</sup> The distinction between bars and brothels was not clear-cut in antiquity: as McGinn has explored, the two were often considered one and the same, with prostitution heavily associated with taverns (and baths).<sup>255</sup> Belica's establishment, then, may well have been a site of prostitution, and she herself may have provided sexual services. Another woman at Vindonissa is referred to in a humorous invitation to a banquet (*convivium*) which mentions a *hospita* – a landlady, but the term was also used for prostitutes and concubines.<sup>256</sup> Whether these particular women were involved either in organising or providing venal sex, we cannot say; but the types of establishments in which they worked were certainly associated with prostitution in the Roman world.

The main piece of literary evidence cited in discussions of military prostitution is the anecdote about Scipio Aemilianus' expulsion of camp-followers at Numantia in 134 BC. Appian, Livy, and Valerius Maximus all state that prostitutes were expelled, with the latter numbering them at 2,000.<sup>257</sup> As discussed above, this anecdote suggests that prostitutes, along with other 'camp-followers', were a common presence; Scipio's actions

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<sup>251</sup> E.g. McGinn (2004), 224 suggests that while junior officers like an *optio* might be involved, commanders would not wish to associate themselves with pimping; likewise Phang (2001), 251.

<sup>252</sup> Speidel (1996), n. 44.

<sup>253</sup> Speidel (1996), 187.

<sup>254</sup> Allison (2013), 28.

<sup>255</sup> McGinn (2004), 15-26.

<sup>256</sup> Speidel (1996), n. 45.

<sup>257</sup> App. *Iber.* 85; Liv. *Per.* 57; Val. Max. 2.7.1.

in expelling them were exceptional. It is unclear whether the claim that 2,000 were present should be taken as exaggeration, however. Another anecdote, in which a centurion accused of raping a freeborn male attempts to excuse himself by claiming that the boy was a prostitute, suggests that male prostitution was accepted.<sup>258</sup> All the evidence which I have been able to gather for this chapter, however, illuminates only the experiences of female prostitutes.

With this limited evidence, most scholarly discussion of military prostitution has been speculative. Mattingly suggested that individual contractors were approached by the military to provide a certain number of prostitutes to an army, perhaps with a ratio of something like one prostitute per forty soldiers, as in the imperial Japanese army.<sup>259</sup> However, we are now in a position to have a much fuller discussion of prostitution in the army – and indeed, in the Roman world generally – thanks to the ostraca from Didymoi and Krokodilo, many of which touch on various aspects of prostitution, including its organisation.<sup>260</sup> In the eastern desert, it seems that a pimp would usually rent a girl to a *praesidium* on a monthly basis, in a contract referred to as a *μίσθωμα*. This would be negotiated with the *curator* of the garrison, and a tax on the rental, sometimes referred to as a *quintana*, would be collected by a *conductor*.<sup>261</sup>

This is clear evidence that the military not only tolerated but facilitated prostitution – and not just in the ‘luxurious’ cities of the east, but in the harsh desert.<sup>262</sup> Indeed, when we consider that prostitution was generally considered an acceptable outlet for male sexuality, why should we doubt that the army made such a provision?<sup>263</sup> Better that the

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<sup>258</sup> Val. Max. 6.1.10.

<sup>259</sup> Mattingly (2011), 116.

<sup>260</sup> On these: Cuvigny (2003b), 374-95, (2010), (2012b), 24-8.

<sup>261</sup> Cuvigny (2012b), 25-8; Nappo and Zerbini (2011), 72-6.

<sup>262</sup> Cf. Haynes (2013), 157-8, cautioning that the interactions between soldiers and civilians at Dura and Antioch may not be generalisable because of the relatively luxurious conditions in cities; we can now say that prostitutes, at least, were available to men in decidedly less luxurious locations.

<sup>263</sup> McGinn (1998), 17.

soldiers focus their attention on prostitutes rather than harassing local women or entering into unofficial marriages in contravention of the ban.<sup>264</sup> The hiring of entertainers and prostitutes at Dura, then, can be seen as an instance of this sort of provision, even if we cannot call building G5 a brothel. The ostraca provide no information on brothel buildings, but since the garrisons were relatively small and apparently served only by one or two prostitutes at a time, there would be no reason for special quarters to be established. Perhaps part of the rental contract included the provision of a room for the girl and her guardian (*epitropos*),<sup>265</sup> or maybe prostitutes lived and slept in communal quarters and worked in the soldiers' own barracks.

Prostitutes served for a limited period in a particular garrison before being sent elsewhere, presumably since there was a demand for different women. The soldiers had favourite girls (precisely what criteria they were interested in is unknown), and collectively chose whom they wanted to rent: in *O.Krok.* 219, for example, some soldiers write on behalf of the whole *praesidium* ('we ask you, and ὅλον τὸ πραισίδιον asks you') to request that a girl called Isidora be sent. The deal would then be negotiated through the *curator*.<sup>266</sup>

Longinus, *curator* of Aphroditēs Orous, to Kilikas, his brother, greetings. The men at the *praesidium* asked me to write to you concerning your girl who makes you sixty drachmas. Send her and I shall take care of the money, or send me an answer and I shall send you the money, and the money for the conductor is for us to pay. Farewell.

Λονγεῖνος κουράτωρ Ἀφροδείτης Ὀρος Κιλικᾶτι τῷ ἀδελφῷ χαίρειν· ἠρώτηκαν με οἱ ἐκ τοῦ πραισιδίου ἵνα σοι γράψω περὶ τῆς παιδίσκης σου ἢ σοι βαστάζει τῶν

<sup>264</sup> Phang (2001), 249-50.

<sup>265</sup> Cuvigny (2012b), 25.

<sup>266</sup> *O.Did.* 430, here with the translation of Bülow-Jacobsen (2012), 367.

ἐξήκοντα δραχμῶν. πέμψον καὶ πρὸς ἐμέ ἐστὶ ὁ χαλκὸς ἢ πέμψον μοι φάσιν καὶ  
πέμψω σοι καὶ τὸ τοῦ κονδούκτορος πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἐστὶ. ἔρροσο.

On the other hand, in *O.Krok.* 214, a deal has been made to bring a girl to Persou whom the garrison apparently did not want – ‘if it weren’t for me,’ writes Panouris, ‘nobody would have rented this girl to the *praesidium*.’ On occasions when great numbers of people would be present, pimps might send their prostitutes to capitalise: a letter to Didyme and Kapparis informs them that ‘there is already a mass of people here [at Persou]’ – for a feast, claims Bülow-Jacobsen – and that they should therefore ‘come here with the girl’.<sup>267</sup>

There is no reason to doubt that the military facilitated prostitution elsewhere besides Dura and the desert routes, but the organisational details would have differed. At larger bases, there may well have been permanent brothels with permanent workers (Belica’s *taberna* at Vindonissa being a potential instance) – although all Roman frontiers featured networks of smaller installations to which prostitutes might be sent. Additionally, we cannot discount the existence of ‘unofficial’ prostitution, with individual women or pimps travelling to military bases (or following armies on the move). Soldiers would also have rented their own slaves, and even their wives to one another (see below). Detached soldiers travelling between posts or staying in urban areas would use local prostitutes, as we see in several Pompeian graffiti: Floronius, a soldier of the seventh legion, reports that he was only able to have sex with six women,<sup>268</sup> while the praetorian Caius Valerius Venustus declared himself *fututor maximum* on the wall of a brothel.<sup>269</sup> The famous Coptos tariff,<sup>270</sup> which charges an extraordinarily high 108 drachmae for prostitutes (though possibly for a group of prostitutes rather than an individual toll),<sup>271</sup> has been suggested as

<sup>267</sup> *O.Krok.* 187.

<sup>268</sup> *CIL* IV, 8767.

<sup>269</sup> *CIL* IV, 2145; p. 30 above.

<sup>270</sup> *OGIS* 674.

<sup>271</sup> Montserrat (1996), 131.

‘a reflection of how lucrative their occupation would be in an area where, aside from the few who took their women along, the men who plied and policed the lonely desert routes would be starved for female company’.<sup>272</sup>

Apart from organisational aspects, the ostraca allow us insights into the lives and experiences of prostitutes. This kind of evidence is extremely rare: rather than inferring social attitudes from the moralistic writings of elite authors or attempting to disentangle truth from literary *topos* in exemplary stories, we can read raw records of real incidents in everyday life.

As discussed above, most of the prostitutes would have been slaves. The girls seem to have been very young, generally referred to as τὸ κοράσιον, but also ἡ παιδίσκη (the little slave)<sup>273</sup> and ἡ μικκά (the little girl).<sup>274</sup> Indeed, many are referred to only by these terms and not by name; compare Horace’s description of the benefits a man can enjoy from a prostitute, including the ability to give her whatever name he pleases (*Ilia et Egeria est; do nomen quodlibet illi*),<sup>275</sup> recalling the way that those who purchased slaves could rename them as they wished.<sup>276</sup> Sometimes, the girls were referred to by price, as when Longinus refers to ‘your girl who makes you sixty drachmas’.<sup>277</sup> This depersonalisation is important to note: the girls were treated by their owners and customers alike as commodities.

We also have some information about the pimps. Above, I mentioned Philokles, the ‘pimp and greengrocer’, who was responsible for most of the prostitution discussed in the ostraca, along with his network of agents. Several women – perhaps former or current prostitutes themselves – were involved in his business, often found escorting girls to their

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<sup>272</sup> Lewis (1983), 145.

<sup>273</sup> *O.Did.* 430, line 6.

<sup>274</sup> *O.Did.* 382, line 4.

<sup>275</sup> Hor. *Sat.* 2.126.

<sup>276</sup> Green (2015), 153-4.

<sup>277</sup> *O.Did.* 430, lines 6-8.

postings. One interesting ostrakon is from a woman called Nemesous, who was escorting a girl across the desert.<sup>278</sup> After their donkey driver forced them to dismount, they had to find another, who stopped after taking them a short distance and demanded payment, which Nemesous had to provide from her own money. The letter is probably an attempt by Nemesous to get reimbursed after an exploitative encounter which cannot have been uncommon for women isolated in the desert. A more successful journey is reported in *O.Did.* 427, where a woman called Thaisous reports that ‘On the 18<sup>th</sup> the girl has arrived with me at Phoinikon’.

In discussing the experiences of the prostitutes, we must immediately foreground the violence inherent in these girls’ lives, which features in a tellingly high proportion of the ostraca relating to prostitution. One of the Krokodilo ostraca, for instance, describes the arrival of a new girl at the *praesidium*. This being a particularly informative and emotive ostrakon, I quote it in full along with Bülow-Jacobsen’s translation:<sup>279</sup>

Panouris to Maximus, his lord and brother, many greetings. If it weren't for me, no one would have rented this girl to the *praesidium*. But I did her guardian a good turn so that he could get his six staters. And she abused me as if I were not human. I took her to the *curator* and she ate and drank for a whole hour. So, Ariston said: ‘Off you go, sleep with Panouris!’ I do my thing to her by force. She is in love with the Dacian and says to Ariston: ‘Give me to the Dacian and take money.’ That is why she abused me.

Πά<v>ουρις Μαζίμω τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ ἀδελφῶ πλῖστα χαίριν. ἢ μὴ διὰ με ἰς τὸ  
πρα<ι>σίδιον οὐδὲς ἐμείσθαι τὸ κοράσιν. ἐγὼ δὲ διακόνηκα τῷ κυρίῳ αὐτῆς ἵνα  
λάβῃ ἔξ στατήρος. καὶ παρακέχρηται μοι ὡς μὴ ἀνθρώπῳ. ἀποφέρω αὐτὴν ὅλην

<sup>278</sup> *O.Did.* 400.

<sup>279</sup> *O.Krok.* 214.

*ὄραν πρὸς τὸν κουράτορα καὶ ἐστὶ καὶ πίνι, ἵνα ἴδῃ Ἀρίστον αὐτῆ ὅτι ὕπαγε, μετὰ Πανούριος κάθειυδε. ἐγὼ τὰ ἐμὰ βία ποιῶ αὐτῆ. φιλῖ τὸν Δάκα κα<ι> λέγι Ἀρίστονι ὅτι δὸς τῷ Δακὶ καὶ δέξαι χαλκόν. ἔνεκε τούτο παρακέχρηται μοι.*

It seems that this girl was being rented for the first time, but refused to have sex with the author of the ostrakon, who therefore raped her. A possible understanding of this situation is that the girl had recently been sold into slavery, and perhaps did not even know that she was being sent to work as a prostitute, the Dacian being a lover from whom she had been separated. The *curator* seems to have tried to put her at ease with food and drink, but ultimately, girls were initiated into prostitution through force.

To me, the most extraordinary part of the ostrakon is line 11: *ἐγὼ τὰ ἐμὰ βία ποιῶ αὐτῆ*. The sentence is at once entirely blunt and forthright, and yet rather unnaturally phrased. For Panouris to take a slave by force is so unobjectionable that he can state it plainly (and then express his bemusement that the girl has abused him); but to express what he has done in ancient Greek, the typical terms associated with rape – *ὑβρις*, *ἀτιμία* – carry a moral judgement inapplicable to the sexual use of slaves. Instead, Panouris attaches *βία* to an apparently idiosyncratic euphemism for intercourse (*τὰ ἐμὰ*, which neither Bülow-Jacobsen nor I have found anywhere else). Prostitutes and slaves typically had no choice but to submit to sex; hence Panouris' oddly phrased explanation of the fact that he had to physically force himself on the girl. The psychology and morality of the rape of slaves in antiquity is perfectly conveyed in this ugly line.

The physical violence to which prostitutes could be subjected is shown vividly in *O.Krok.* 218, where a man called Didymos writes that 'my girl' (*μοῦ τὸ κοράσιν*) has almost been killed by a man called Sabinos (Didymos uses the word *φόνευται*, but means 'nearly killed' or 'severely wounded' since the girl is still alive). The attack has left the girl with a broken foot, and she is unable to get out of bed or work (the real concern for

Didymos, one suspects). Prostitutes also faced violence not just from customers but from their pimps. In one letter, it appears that a prostitute has failed to deliver her earnings to Philokles (not certain, but the most probable interpretation).<sup>280</sup> Philokles and his associate Kapparis write to Sknips, ordering her to get the money from the girl: ‘Say to the woman Se...ous: “Send us the three staters. You did not give them to the horseman. You force us to hurry along with the horseman. Show her this letter and read it to her, and break [it].’ Bülow-Jacobsen notes that the verb ‘to break’ (*κἀταζον*) could refer to the ostrakon – or to the girl, i.e. Sknips is being told to compel the girl to hand over the money.<sup>281</sup>

Like all slaves, then, prostitutes were vulnerable to violence and lived under constant threat. However, they did have certain protections. A rental contract could stipulate that the contract would be terminated if the girl was harmed, as Philokles makes clear: ‘You know that we have entered into written agreement that no-one will do the girl any harm contrary to the agreement.’<sup>282</sup> These clauses were presumably enforced by the officers and *curatores* in charge of the *praesidia*. Among the ostraca from Mons Claudianus, there is a letter to the centurion Alexandros, asking him to ensure that the *κοράσιον* Nike is not harmed by anyone (*ὕπὸ οὐδενὸς ὕβριζέσθε*).<sup>283</sup> Philokles advised his business partner Kapparis and his companion Didyme that ‘if anyone is violent to you (*ἄν τις σὺ βίαν ποιῆ*), you have the *curator*; he will ensure that nobody does anything to you’.<sup>284</sup>

A list of stipulations is laid out in a fascinating example of a husband prostituting his wife.<sup>285</sup> McGinn has previously argued that the literary sources which attest this form of prostitution were grounded more in anxiety than in reality, and the practice was

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<sup>280</sup> *O.Krok.* 160.

<sup>281</sup> Bülow-Jacobsen (2019), 51 n. 12.

<sup>282</sup> *O.Did.* 390: οἶδες πῶς μετὰ ἀλλήλων σύνφωνοι γεγονάμεν διὰ γραμμμάτων, μηδεμία<ν> ἐπήρεάν τις ποιήσει τῷ κορασίῳ παρὰ τὴν συμφώνησιν.

<sup>283</sup> *O.Claud.* 2.386.

<sup>284</sup> *O.Krok.* 152, lines 26-31.

<sup>285</sup> *O.Did.* 406.

probably not particularly common – once again, however, the ostraca provide us with a real example.<sup>286</sup> The husband who has prostituted his wife tells Rusticus, who is delivering her to Aphroditēs Orous and apparently acting as *epitropos*, that his wife is to be returned if anyone ‘outrages her’ (*ὀβρίση*).<sup>287</sup> Rusticus is to ensure that only those whom he authorises will sleep with the woman, and to deal with any problems until the centurion can intervene.

However, protection was not always guaranteed. In *O.Krok.* 218 mentioned above, in which a girl was assaulted by a man named Sabinos, Didymos says that he intended to go to the decurion about the incident, but his comrades stopped him because of the late hour, and fearing that Sabinos would make a counter-accusation of violence. Such incidents would ultimately come down to one man’s word against another’s – compare the incident in *O.Did.* 325, in which a soldier disrupted life at a fort by spreading false testimony (*ψευδομαρτυρων*). If an individual was more favoured by a commanding officer, others would have been unlikely to seek official redress against him; hence when Didymos says that he later went to confront Sabinos personally (only succeeding in getting himself called a cocksucker – *ψολοφάγος*), he may already have concluded that he would come off second-best in an official investigation. Institutional solidarity would have protected many a soldier against the accusations of prostitutes and pimps.

Hence prostitutes’ owners, pimps, and guardians would have to protect their girls through credible threats of counter-violence. In the case of the man who prostituted his wife under the protection of Rusticus, he tells Rusticus that ‘If she has any problems with anyone there that cannot be settled informally, you must deal with these matters until the centurion arrives.’<sup>288</sup> There is another instance of men prostituting their wives, in a letter

<sup>286</sup> McGinn (1998), 171-94; (2004), 57.

<sup>287</sup> *O.Did.* 406.

<sup>288</sup> *O.Did.* 406, lines 14-18: *ἀν δὲ ἔχη πράγμα ἐκεῖ, ὃ μὴ δύνηται εὐλυτωθῆναι παραδέξει αὐτὰ ἕως ἔλθῃ ὁ κεντυρίων.*

written by Philokles where a man called Claudius has prostituted his wife under Philokles' protection.<sup>289</sup> Philokles' letter is written to a woman who has been treated violently while under Claudius' protection, leading Bülow-Jacobsen to suggest that the two men had prostituted their wives (Sknips, in Philokles' case), and the women had exchanged places.<sup>290</sup> To Philokles' outrage, while he has protected Claudius' wife from violence, Sknips (if indeed it is her) has been abused. The letter makes no mention of legal recourse or the involvement of officers or *curatores*; rather Philokles states twice that he will treat Claudius with the violence that has befallen his woman (*ἀποδώσω αὐτῷ τὴν ὄβριν τὴν σου ἐπόησαν*).<sup>291</sup>

Prostitutes could find themselves in the midst of disputes between soldiers and slave-owners. In *O.Did.* 333, a man called Cornelius writes to Antonius, who seems to have seized Cornelius' girl and refuses to return her. Cornelius states that he will take the girl back and make Antonius pay for the days that she has been unable to work for him. Bülow-Jacobsen argues that Antonius had fallen in love with the girl,<sup>292</sup> but it seems more likely to me that he seized her in some sort of dispute: Cornelius writes 'I have already told you ten times, if you have any accusations against me, come forward. For you are not my creditor (*δανιστής*), since I do not owe you anything'.<sup>293</sup> Possibly, then, Antonius believed that Cornelius owed him, and took his girl either in lieu of payment or until the debt was settled. The threat of violence under which prostitutes laboured is chillingly illustrated by the final sentence of the ostrakon: 'I hope she is alive'.<sup>294</sup>

In sum, the evidence for the abuse of prostitutes is plentiful, and violence is a theme in many of the ostraca concerning prostitution. However, as McGinn points out,

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<sup>289</sup> *O.Did.* 393.

<sup>290</sup> Bülow-Jacobsen (2012), 319.

<sup>291</sup> Lines 7-9; repeated at 17-20.

<sup>292</sup> Bülow-Jacobsen (2012), 249.

<sup>293</sup> *O.Did.* 333, lines 2-5.

<sup>294</sup> Lines 12-13: *εὐχομαι αὐτὴν ζῆν*.

‘Slave prostitutes, insofar as they counted as economic assets, might even have received better treatment in some cases than free prostitutes.’<sup>295</sup> These sex slaves were not disposable like the ‘comfort women’ captured by the Japanese in the second Sino-Japanese War, who faced appalling conditions and were considered ‘public ammunition’.<sup>296</sup> If a girl was too injured to work, as in *O.Krok.* 218, or was so brutalised that she was driven to suicide, a pimp would lose a considerable investment. Hence the contractual stipulations, the appeals to the authorities, and the threats of violence against men who mistreated the girls.

Nonetheless, these women were forced to have sex with numerous men in order to fulfil their contracts, and experienced violence from their pimps if they refused. Nor were the material conditions in which they lived very pleasant: one prostitute, Prokla, arrived at the *praesidium* to which she had been rented having mislaid her *chiton*, and so had to wear something given to her by the man who escorted her; she thus seems to have owned only one tunic.<sup>297</sup> In the letter, the man tries to get a new *chiton* sent for her (a request we find in another letter from someone who has just escorted a girl).<sup>298</sup> If the girl was allowed to earn money of her own, such costs might have been deducted from her pay, just as ‘comfort women’ were sometimes given small amounts to buy new clothes by the proprietors of ‘comfort stations’, which were deducted from their ‘earnings’.<sup>299</sup>

Although recent studies of Roman prostitution have stressed the importance of identifying the ways in which prostitutes acted with their own agency, rather than treating them as entirely passive victims, the nature of the literary evidence makes this difficult.<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>295</sup> McGinn (2004), 61.

<sup>296</sup> Watanabe (1999), 20.

<sup>297</sup> *O.Krok.* 182, lines 7-10.

<sup>298</sup> *O.Did.* 427.

<sup>299</sup> Tanaka (2002), 55.

<sup>300</sup> E.g. Flemming (1999).

However, we can do so with some of the ostraca. Several letters<sup>301</sup> concern a girl called Serapias, who is twice accused of creating ‘unpleasantness’ (*ἀηδίαν*),<sup>302</sup> so that Sknips is sent to Simiou to deal with her in *O.Krok. 223*. Bülow-Jacobsen writes that Serapias ‘seems to have been a troublemaker’, which is to take the perspective of the letter-writers; but if we consider life from Serapias’ point of view, her actions can be interpreted as an entirely understandable strategy for survival.

It is impossible to reconstruct exactly what the ‘unpleasantness’ involved: *O.Krok. 223* mentions Sknips being despatched to deal with the situation; *O.Krok. 224* gives the details that Serapias is petitioning the *curator* against various cavalrymen and soldiers, and threatens to do so against Philokles (probably her pimp); *O.Krok. 225* is a ‘love-letter’ from Serapias to an unknown individual (‘since I went away from you I have not slept night or day’), written for her in the hand of Philokles; in *O.Krok. 226*, Serapias has secured a knife. One possible reconstruction of events might be that *O.Krok. 225* was written before 223 and 224, and Serapias refused to work at some point after falling in love with the addressee of her love letter. This could be a matter of romance, or something more pragmatic – Serapias could have entered into a relationship with a soldier whom she believed could protect her against Philokles and his enforcers, either leading to her freedom or enabling her to secure better working conditions for herself. There are many things which a prostitute in such a situation could conceivably want: having to serve fewer customers, more selectivity over customers, better food and clothes, or the chance to keep a higher percentage of one’s earnings, to name a few.

As mentioned above, petitioning higher authorities was an important way to resolve disputes or attack one’s enemies. Serapias threatens to petition the prefect against

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<sup>301</sup> *O.Krok. 223-228*; note that 226 concerns a Sarapias, which may be an alternative spelling of Serapias or a different woman.

<sup>302</sup> *O.Krok. 223*, line 8, 10; *O.Krok. 224*, line 3.

Philokles, and has already been making accusations against soldiers to the *curator*.<sup>303</sup> It seems extraordinary that a prostitute would be able to seek redress in this way – perhaps only possible if she had acquired a protector as I suggested; possibly she was not a slave either. Serapias’ acquisition of a knife in *O.Krok.* 226 was the most obvious but ultimately least effective kind of protection – although she may have been able to temporarily ward off an aggressor, a girl could not hold out in a garrison of armed men without protection from her *epitropos*, other soldiers, or the *curator*.

There is one ostrakon which stands among the most moving pieces of evidence from the ancient world. Although its contents are otherwise obscure, the first line reads *οἶδες ὅτι πόσα πέπασσχον εἶνα ἐλευθέρα γένωμαι*: ‘you know how much I have suffered to become free’.<sup>304</sup> The rest of the letter suggests that this was a reply to criticism: the writer says ‘you know that I have not made debts for useless things, but in order that we both live through this famine’, perhaps mentioning how hard she had worked to escape slavery in response to accusations of laziness or frivolousness. This woman may well have been one of Philokles’ prostitutes, maybe even Sknips, who had bought her freedom.<sup>305</sup> Just how much suffering is contained in that one word, *πέπασσχον*, we can only imagine; the author clearly had not forgotten, and cherished her freedom. If the experiences of the women studied in this chapter are anything to go by, her road to freedom would have been marked by pain, fear, brave resistance – and an escape of which others might only have dreamt.

Most soldiers would probably have had contact with prostitutes at military bases. Prostitutes constitute an important part of the population of any Roman military community, but have hitherto been understudied or ignored; now, with the evidence from the eastern desert, we can not only recognise their presence but understand certain aspects

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<sup>303</sup> *O.Krok.* 224.

<sup>304</sup> *O.Did.* 394.

<sup>305</sup> Bülow-Jacobsen (2012), 322.

of their lives. Although we have no good evidence for how many prostitutes might be found at a military base, we ought to consider that many – maybe most – of the archaeologically identified females at Roman military bases were prostitutes. It is not uncommon for the majority of women in frontier communities to be prostitutes – in 1860 San Francisco, for instance, 85.6 % of the Chinese female population were prostitutes, and prostitutes constituted 96% of women employed in a money earning capacity.<sup>306</sup> This possibility has not been discussed for Roman military bases, with most scholars seeming to assume that women at bases were mainly wives and family members.<sup>307</sup>

Of course, artefact assemblages do not allow us to disentangle the statuses of people whom we can identify as probably female. However, we ought to recognise that the roles of slave, wife, and prostitute often overlapped: most prostitutes were slaves, many wives were freed slaves, and some wives were prostituted. I again quote McGinn's explanation that 'prostitution functioned as just another form of exploitation of women's labor, one of a series of unprestigious jobs in which slaves worked for their masters, daughters their fathers, and wives their husbands'.<sup>308</sup> Most sex took place at the direction of men who controlled or owned women, and modern scholars ought to recognise that soldiers' sexual relations were often exploitative.<sup>309</sup> Casey's use of the term 'good-time girls' to describe women providing sex to Roman soldiers recalls happy images of women kissing American soldiers returning from World War II, not the reality of the Roman world.<sup>310</sup>

When we consider the question of soldiers' social relations and interactions with

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<sup>306</sup> Tong (1994), 94; McGinn (2004), 173-77 on the demography of prostitution.

<sup>307</sup> Cf. Allison (2013), 22, discussing the possible status levels of women at a base: 'in the families and households of officers, in the families of ordinary soldiers, tradeswomen, female slaves, concubines, and, no doubt, prostitutes.'

<sup>308</sup> McGinn (2004), 73.

<sup>309</sup> Mattingly (2011), 117.

<sup>310</sup> Casey (1982), 125.

civilians, the fact that prostitutes were brought to the army and worked at military bases means that soldiers would not have to enter civilian areas to purchase sex. Pollard makes a similar point about the Dura ‘brothel’ – if the army had its own slave prostitutes and brothels, the army’s participation in the local cash economy would be reduced.<sup>311</sup> Taverns have been identified in the centres of Roman military bases, such as Belica’s establishment at Vindonissa, and a building at Vetera I where a concentration of female necklace beads, gaming equipment, and fine ceramics may indicate a tavern or inn involving women.<sup>312</sup> Military organisation of prostitution was another way in which the army’s practices encouraged the social isolation of the soldiers.

### Conclusion

In this chapter, I introduced one of the major strands of research in recent Roman army studies, examining the many non-soldiers who could be found in the military milieu. I attempted to deepen the discussion of the extended community by probing the extent to which these people really can be considered part of the same community as the soldiers, and explored the experiences of some of the different groups in detail.

Returning to our central question – that of social integration and a sense of community – the recent efforts of scholars like Allison and Birley to demonstrate just how permeable the barriers of the fort were to non-military personnel should certainly cast doubt on the idea that a soldier’s immediate social circle might only be composed of other soldiers. The heavy involvement of veterans in the political administration of extramural settlements, as well as in supply, provided a crucial link between the two parts of the community.

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<sup>311</sup> Pollard (2000), 188.

<sup>312</sup> Allison (2013), 330.

This further complicates the discussion of primary groups – since a legionary was able to socialise with non-military personnel on a daily basis, another of the key bases for primary group formation, in this case social isolation, is removed. Many of these interactions would have purely transactional, but many surely were not, especially considering the presence of family members among the extended military community. For many soldiers, military service was not a dramatic dislocation from regular life – some took their families with them or entered into networks already containing relations or acquaintances; the communities which they now entered were not austere and lonely, but bustling with all the activity of a town; daily life was not strictly focused on military or military-provided activities, rather civilian suppliers provided varied venues and opportunities for the soldier to spend his time.

On the other hand, the fact that the extended military community provided so many of the services which might bring soldiers into contact with the surrounding civilian population enhances the argument for the general isolation of soldiers from the wider population. It would be interesting to know to what extent members of the extended community were also isolated from the rest of the population, either by choice or as a result of their association with the military. Verboven has argued that there existed a corporate identity among traders associated with the military.<sup>313</sup> It may be to such an identity that a victim of military abuse appeals in one of the Vindolanda tablets: a trader, who identifies himself as a ‘man from overseas’ (*homo transmarinus*), may be emphasising precisely that he is no ordinary civilian to be beaten and robbed like other provincials – rather, he is an essential part of the military supply network, a bona fide member of the extended military community.<sup>314</sup>

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<sup>313</sup> Verboven (2007).

<sup>314</sup> *Tab. Vindol.* 344.

When talking of soldiers and civilians, we ought to think of a core of military personnel, surrounded by the extended military community, with the local civilian population another distinct group. As I have cautioned in this chapter, we ought not overestimate the extent to which members of the extended community lived and dwelt within military bases, and bear in mind their exclusion from membership of military units or participation in ceremonies. Yet even as they were clearly distinct, this group was physically and socially close to the main military community. In a way, the extended military community acted as something of a buffer between the military and the general population; in matters of supply, for instance, they dealt directly with both groups. Thus the extended community was an enabler of isolation, providing a necessary logistical link between a military unit and the wider province while minimising social interaction.

My conclusions in the previous chapter, that hostility between soldiers and civilians led to an inward-looking military culture, in which commitment to military values was amplified by constant exposure and social reliance, are further reinforced by this chapter. The extended military community, as a buffer between soldiers and the wider population, solidified the separation not just practically but conceptually, as shown through the corporate identity of military suppliers and the protestations of our wronged *homo transmarinus*.

Work on extended military communities has also shown that one did indeed find *communities* at military bases, where one might expect all the cultural nuances and developed social networks of any township. Additionally, the craftspeople and traders who made up a legion's immediate supply network were often family connections of serving soldiers – not just spouses and children, but non-military siblings, parents, and extended family – or were former soldiers themselves. All of this leads to a fascinating conclusion about military culture: scholars' extensive efforts to explore the heterogeneity of

populations around military bases point to a society every bit as ‘isolated and in-bred’ as the one proposed by Shaw.<sup>315</sup>

However, we must also appreciate the complexities of extended communities, and the hierarchies, social separations, and conflicts to be found within them. It is true, on the one hand, that non-military personnel were accepted and integral to military bases; on the other hand, the idea that the extended community can be considered as one, or that its members all had a similar orientation towards the military, cannot be maintained. Some slaves may well have drawn their identity from the units which they served, particularly those in more comfortable positions, but many others would have felt no affiliation. Some traders and suppliers, especially those who followed units, could have become integrated into a community around a particular legion and drawn their identity from the unit; others would have treated the military with a more cynical or wary eye; others like Philokles, despite evincing some social integration, could not draw their identity from a particular unit, since they may have served many, and unlike the soldiers were not given a unit assignment that persisted regardless of where they were located.<sup>316</sup>

In terms of motivation, legionaries must have enjoyed a sense of power and prestige: they were powerful figures relative both to the surrounding civilian population, who feared them, and within the milieu of military bases. A large number of slaves and servants were under the control of the soldiers, and these may have been a particularly despised bunch: Horace depicts adulterers being degraded and punished in the afterlife by having *calones* – here an example of a particularly disreputable group – urinating on them.<sup>317</sup> For recruits from low-status backgrounds, the opportunity to exercise power and exist in the upper social stratum of a community would have been appealing, and helps us

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<sup>315</sup> Shaw (1983).

<sup>316</sup> See the following chapter.

<sup>317</sup> Hor. *Sat.* 1.2.44. Gowers (2012), 101 argues that *permixerunt* here, though literally referring to urination, indicates ‘buggery’.

to understand why legionaries so enthusiastically incorporated their military units into their identities: this was a world which provided them with authority, even if they were not particularly respectable in the eyes of our elite sources. A great deal of military labour being performed by slaves means that many of the tasks we might think of as communal bonding exercises could in fact have been closer to slave oversight.

A system so reliant on slave labour naturally entails a great deal of violence. As we have seen, prostitutes not only suffered a great deal of violence directly, but were surrounded by it: their guardians, pimps, clients, husbands and lovers could clash violently, with resolution sometimes coming through officials at military bases, and sometimes between the involved parties. The quantity of economic activity, and particularly loans, would also have contributed to conflict. A community based around men trained and equipped ultimately to kill, surrounded by catalysts to violence, would have the potential for extreme disorder. This may help to explain some of the busywork explored in chapter 5 as a component of military discipline – keeping the soldiers engaged was not simply a matter of elite moralising, but was a necessary part of ensuring that a potentially fractious soldiery was kept occupied.

The picture that has emerged – a core of soldiers, itself highly stratified, surrounded by a diverse and sometimes divided extended community, surrounded by a civilian population who were largely negatively disposed towards the military – makes the question of the soldier's attachments even more complex. Legionaries could serve with their family members living in close proximity, own slaves, and be part of complex business networks, as consumers, sellers, lenders, and couriers. But this is certainly not to say that legionaries' lives were much the same as in regular society – all of this took place within a separate social world centred on the military. Rather than interactions with non-military personnel drawing soldiers away from close attachment to their military units, if

anything they were another way that these attachments and identities were reinforced, since they took place entirely within the confines of the military environment. To complete our examination of the legionary's complex social world, we turn in the next chapter to the important issue of unit detachment.

## Chapter 8: Detached Service

Most work on the Roman army explicitly or implicitly concerns itself with large military bases, and with military units at their full theoretical strength. However, the practice of detachment meant that many soldiers did not serve in these contexts. As I explore in this chapter, which first analyses the workings of the detachment system before drawing out its implications for the themes of this thesis, the dispersal of military units has significant ramifications for the discussions in the previous chapters. The issues of cohesion, unit affiliation, social life, and military communities all become far more complex when detachment is factored in. Simply put, the topics of this thesis (indeed, of almost any work on the Roman army) cannot be considered fully discussed without taking into account this often-neglected aspect of the Roman army. This chapter will complicate, reinforce, and elucidate the rest of the thesis, and allow us to complete our survey of the army as a social environment.

Legions very frequently sent smaller units away from the main base to undertake various tasks, in detachments usually referred to as vexillations.<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that not all detached units were called vexillations (Goldsworthy refers to the group of 16 soldiers which Pliny sent to assist a procurator as a vexillation, but Pliny does not use the term);<sup>2</sup> my purpose in this chapter, nonetheless, is to deal with detached service in general, not strictly vexillations. It is common in modern scholarship to distinguish between war vexillations and those employed for peacetime activities in pacified provinces (*Kriegsvexillationen* and *Arbeits- und Besatzungsvexillationen*, as Saxer distinguishes them), though there was no ancient terminological distinction.<sup>3</sup> Vexillations were entirely

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<sup>1</sup> On vexillations, see Saxer (1967); Tully (2002) and (2004).

<sup>2</sup> Goldsworthy (1996), 27; Plin. *Ep.* 10.27-8.

<sup>3</sup> Saxer (1967).

variable in size, depending on their task, ranging from small quarrying vexillations under an *optio*<sup>4</sup> to wartime vexillations of thousands.<sup>5</sup> It is commonly accepted that large wartime vexillations typically consisted of multiples of 500 men, though we can never tell how far our sources are rounding numbers.<sup>6</sup> Mostly, inscriptional sources do not specify the number of men in a vexillation, with a few exceptions, such as an 855-man detachment from *II Adiutrix*.<sup>7</sup>

Vexillations were often brigaded with detachments from other legions, as well as auxiliaries. For example, a combined vexillation of *I Germanica*, *V Alaudae*, *XX Valeria Victrix*, and *XXI Rapax* is mentioned in an inscription which probably refers to the suppression of the revolt of the Treveri, Aedui, and Turoni in AD 21.<sup>8</sup> There may have been various reasons to employ mixed vexillations: most practically, they meant that entire legions did not have to be removed from their bases and sent off on campaign; but they also enabled more soldiers to gain experience and stimulated competition between units. Sometimes, only picked troops were taken when reliability was required, as in the *vexilla delectorum ex Illyrico et Aegypto* called upon by Corbulo.<sup>9</sup> Finds from the Roman military base at Zeugma illustrate just how mobile and intermixed military units could be – men from eleven different legions are attested there.<sup>10</sup> As Elton points out, although Zeugma's role as a staging post goes some way to explaining the presence of men from so many different units, the number of different tile stamps suggests that many of the men also stayed for some time and worked there.<sup>11</sup>

Away from the base, detachments could be accommodated in a variety of ways. For

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<sup>4</sup> E.g. *RIB* 1008.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. Suet. *Vesp.* 6.2; Jos. *BJ.* 2.500, 5.43-4; Tully (2004), 140.

<sup>6</sup> Tully (2002).

<sup>7</sup> *CIL* III, 13439.

<sup>8</sup> *CIL* XIV, 3602.

<sup>9</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 15.26.

<sup>10</sup> Hartmann and Speidel (2013), 388-90.

<sup>11</sup> Elton (2013), 376.

larger groupings, there were ‘vexillation fortresses’, such as the structure at Longthorpe, apparently capable of accommodating just under three thousand men including cavalry.<sup>12</sup> These fortresses housed ‘special groupings which cut across the regimental arrangements of the Roman army’, mixing together soldiers from different legions as well as auxiliaries.<sup>13</sup> Smaller installations took the form of towers, fortlets, and forts, and there has been considerable quibbling over the distinction between the latter two.<sup>14</sup> Rather than classification according to an arbitrary size limit, it is more useful to distinguish forts from fortlets on the basis of whether they possess *principia* (fortlets lack these administrative structures).<sup>15</sup> These matters of archaeological classification are not particularly troublesome for our purposes (and many authors do not distinguish between fortresses and forts), but the distinction reminds us that some bases lacked a headquarters building, while others possessed one even though they were not full legionary fortresses. The latter would exercise authority over smaller nearby installations, and distribute its own garrison as detachments; thus we see, for example, infantrymen being assigned to towers and outposts from the fort of Maximianon.<sup>16</sup> The varied typology of fortified structures attests to the many forms that legionary deployment could take, with units of any size formed by amalgamating detachments from different army sub-units or branches of service. Near-total flexibility in unit formation and deployment was mirrored by flexibility in fortification design; as Jeffrey Davies summarises: ‘Fort sizes and garrison types were manifestly judiciously chosen in response to broad strategic concerns as well as local conditions, and these factors could, and did, change over time.’<sup>17</sup>

It is interesting to note that under Diocletian, legions were decreased in size to one

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<sup>12</sup> Frere and St. Joseph (1974), esp. 34-5.

<sup>13</sup> Bidwell (2007), 26-7.

<sup>14</sup> Symonds (2018), 5-16.

<sup>15</sup> Frere and St Joseph (1983), 135.

<sup>16</sup> Cuvigny (2003a), 308.

<sup>17</sup> Davies (2005), 100.

or two thousand men, the usual size of fighting vexillations in our period.<sup>18</sup> Evidently, the large legion had outgrown its usefulness – and the extensive use of vexillations in the first and second centuries suggests that Diocletian’s measure effectively formalised a development which had been occurring for some time. Webster suggests that Marcus Aurelius’ use of an army of many vexillations in the Marcomannic Wars finally ‘demonstrated the need for a permanent mobile force’.<sup>19</sup> Saxer<sup>20</sup> and Dobson<sup>21</sup> have argued that as the legions became increasingly fixed, with the last permanent change of legion base occurring under Marcus, the use of detachments naturally increased.

For our purposes, one of the most pertinent issues is the internal organisation of vexillations, and how men were selected from their legions. One might assume that whole *centuriae* or cohorts would most commonly be detached, and indeed the detachment of cohorts is evidenced a few times: many building inscriptions from Britain were set up by single cohorts,<sup>22</sup> and in Hadrian’s speech at Lambaesis, he mentions that a different cohort is sent each year from *III Augusta* to the proconsul.<sup>23</sup> However, Hadrian also mentions that *III Augusta* had sent five men from each *centuria* along with a cohort to another legion as reinforcements (*supplementum*).<sup>24</sup> This arrangement, Kennedy argues, entailed minimal disruption to the parent legion, while still focusing the vexillation around a pre-existing cohort;<sup>25</sup> nevertheless, this meant that every *centuria* lost men, who would find themselves serving in a new and unfamiliar unit. Just as we observed soldiers assigned to assist *centuriae* other than their own while at the base in chapter 1, individuals could apparently be sent off with detachments principally composed of another unit.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Strobel (2007), 268.

<sup>19</sup> Webster (1985), 82-7.

<sup>20</sup> Saxer (1967), 123-5.

<sup>21</sup> Dobson (1986), 18-19.

<sup>22</sup> *RIB* 1342, 1343, 1344, 1422, 1959, 1960.

<sup>23</sup> Speidel (2006), 8: field 2, lines 3-4.

<sup>24</sup> Speidel (2006), 8: field 2, lines 6-7.

<sup>25</sup> Kennedy (1985), 158.

<sup>26</sup> Fink, *RMR* 9.

Another inscription which gives some indication of how a vexillation was selected, from Lower Moesia and dated to AD 155, presents a vexillation totalling 76 men: a centurion, *beneficarius consularis*, *tesserarius*, *tubicen*, *cornicen*, *medicus*, two *venatores*, a decurion; and eight *militēs* from the legion's first cohort, five from the second cohort, eight from the third, nine from the fourth, and 37 from the fifth. Again, the selection of the vexillation aimed to minimise disruption to the legion's units by spreading the burden across the cohorts, rather than taking a single *centuria*. Rankov has suggested that since only the first five cohorts of the legion are represented, the vexillation may have been rotated out for another detachment composed of men from the legion's other five cohorts.<sup>27</sup> This is entirely speculative, but since we do know of rotation for soldiers on detached service (see below), this may have been one method of administering such rotation.

The other key inscription relating to vexillation composition, a list of soldiers from the *limes Tripolitanus* dating between AD 199-211, is badly damaged and only 103 of an estimated 300 soldiers' names survive.<sup>28</sup> The men are listed by cohort and *centuria*, and we observe that most centuries contributed very few men, while two *centuriae* contributed a larger number:

*(centuria) Erri Saturnini: 6*

*Auli Suri Iusti: 2*

*Valeri Proculi: 34*

*Flavi Victoris: 3*

*Maximi: 2*

*Quinti Gelli Iuvenalis: 2*

*Iuli: 9*

*Domiti Maximi: 26*

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<sup>27</sup> Rankov (1983), 52-3.

<sup>28</sup> *I. L. Afr.* 27 = *AE* 1922, 54; see *C.R.A.I.* 1921, 236-48.

Besides these, two names from the *centuria* listed prior to that of Errius Saturninus survive, and the final *centuria Aureli Aucti* is incomplete but has 13 men whose names survive. The *centuriae* are ordered according to their cohort, and it seems to me highly probable that like the vexillation from Moesia, this garrison contained men from a limited number of the legion's cohorts. Each column has space for around 50 names, and there would have been six columns, so around 300 men in total.<sup>29</sup> We therefore have about a third of the total list, but only one cohort distinction (*COH III* in line 47 of the second column). Either the legion's other cohorts contributed only a few soldiers each, or, as seems more plausible and is also the case with the Moesian vexillation, not all of the legion's cohorts contributed men. A number of inscriptions from North Africa also list men in vexillations by cohort rather than century, and we ought therefore to conclude that the selection process for detached service mainly took place at the level of the cohort.<sup>30</sup>

The composition of the Moesian vexillation, like the force of *III Augusta* drawing five men from each of the legion's *centuriae*, suggests no regard for maintaining pre-existing unit cohesion (though note that while part of a vexillation, the men are recorded according to their original cohorts in the legion; their unit affiliation has not been severed). The Moesia vexillation, interestingly, forms a quasi-*centuria* of its own: it has 75 men, and almost a complete command structure (centurion, *tesserarius*, *tubicen*, *cornicen*). This makes it all the more striking that a pre-existing *centuria* was not taken from the legion. This is also the case with the two duty rosters of *cohors XX Palmyrenorum* at Dura, dating to 219 and 222:<sup>31</sup> widely differing numbers of men are drawn from each *centuria* and *turma* ('in apparently haphazard fashion', writes Breeze).<sup>32</sup> In 219, the outposts of Becchufrayn and Appadana both had garrisons drawn from every single *centuria* and

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<sup>29</sup> *C.R.A.I.* 1921, 247.

<sup>30</sup> Speidel (1982), 854-6; Picard (1944), nos. 1, 22, 31, 32, 42, 43.

<sup>31</sup> *RMR* 1 and 2.

<sup>32</sup> Breeze (1977), 3; Breeze also usefully tabulates *RMR* 1 and 2.

*turma*. Overall, it appears that in distributing assignments, army sub-units were almost infinitely divisible; and while close ties would have developed between soldiers from various units stationed together on extended garrison duty, the selection process was unconcerned with maintaining cohesion.

Soldiers were presumably selected according to their suitability for the detachment's task; men with special skills might sometimes be required, such as the two *venatores* accompanying the vexillation of *XI Claudia* mentioned above.<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, particularly unskilled men may have been picked out for tasks which amounted to drudgery, as we might imagine of the stone-cutting which Julius Apollinaris was so pleased to have avoided<sup>34</sup> (a now-lost quarry graffito by a less fortunate individual apparently read *Apollonius Damninius nolui*).<sup>35</sup> It is plausible that these more unpleasant postings were given out as informal punishments, and Goldsworthy even suggests that 'the worst soldiers and trouble-makers' might have been sent off with vexillations intended to serve with another legion.<sup>36</sup> An early second century ostrakon seems to preserve an attempt by a soldier to bribe his way out of an unwanted assignment, suggesting that like the corrupt practices surrounding furlough, officers might have accepted sweeteners from their men for more or less favourable detached assignments.<sup>37</sup>

Provincial governors could apparently request that specialist personnel be sent to them: for instance, Pliny was advised by Trajan to approach the governor of neighbouring Moesia Inferior for a *librator* (military engineer) to assist with a canal project in Bithynia-Pontus.<sup>38</sup> It is also possible that specialist military personnel were assigned from some

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<sup>33</sup> *CIL* III, 7449.

<sup>34</sup> *P. Mich.* 8.466, lines 21-4.

<sup>35</sup> *RIB* 1952.

<sup>36</sup> Goldsworthy (1996), 27.

<sup>37</sup> *O.Krok.* 95.

<sup>38</sup> *Plin. Ep.* 10.41-2, 61-2.

‘central bureau’ or by the emperor and his *consilium*.<sup>39</sup> It is entirely plausible that local commanders could request detachments as well as skilled individuals, and although one could potentially conceive of commanders arranging to ‘loan’ vexillations among each other, it seems far likelier that this was centrally organised.

Some of the distances between legion bases and their vexillations are quite remarkable. A Domitianic inscription by a centurion of *legio XII Fulminata* (most likely commanding a vexillation at an outpost) was found south of Baku in Azerbaijan, some 900km from the legion’s base at Melitene.<sup>40</sup> Vexillations of *II Traiana Fortis* and *VI Ferrata* were tasked to the remote Farasan Island off the coast of Saudi Arabia, perhaps to supervise trade.<sup>41</sup> On the other hand, there were cases where service away from the base did not entail great separation from the main force and its fortress; it seems that along Hadrian’s Wall, for example, fortlets were manned by short-term garrisons with a high turnover. Jilek and Breeze argue that this is even visible in the small finds assemblages at fortlets and towers compared to forts: a lack of metal fittings indicating storage boxes or trunks, storage vessels, or storage pits accords well with soldiers keeping the majority of their possessions at the main base, to which they could expect to return frequently.<sup>42</sup>

In general, towers – far less suited to long-term occupation – are found close to large installations, whereas fortlets can be found around 100km from the nearest fort or fortress, suggesting that the latter were usually occupied for longer ‘shifts’.<sup>43</sup> Evidence indicates stays lasting for months or a few years: one soldier, writing from the Nubian fortress of Pselkis, tells his mother that two months hence, he will have to return to another eighteen months of garrison duty (having apparently returned from such duty three months

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<sup>39</sup> Hirt (2010), 172-3.

<sup>40</sup> *AE* 1951, 263.

<sup>41</sup> *AE* 2005, 1639 and 1640.

<sup>42</sup> Jilek and Breeze (2007), 208-12.

<sup>43</sup> Symonds (2018), 16.

previously).<sup>44</sup> A late first century papyrus of *legio III Cyrenaica* records the comings and goings of four individual soldiers.<sup>45</sup> Their duties seemed to have lasted for a few months: one soldier is away for three or four months at the granary at Neapolis, for example.<sup>46</sup> Speidel suggests that the construction of the fort at Bu Njem, which took nearly six years, was undertaken by successive detachments working for roughly eighteen month stints, as opposed to a unit being stuck in the desert for many years.<sup>47</sup> However, multiple-year stints are not unknown: from what remains legible of the two rosters of *cohors XX Palmyrenorum* at Dura, we can observe that at least 17 or 18 soldiers were present in the outpost at Appadana in both 219 and 222.<sup>48</sup> Breeze argues that since no soldier on the lists can be shown to have served at two different outposts, it is unlikely that these men had returned to Dura and been reassigned in the three-year gap.<sup>49</sup>

Rotation of detachments is also mentioned in Hadrian's speech at Lambaesis, with a different cohort sent each year to the proconsul (*cohors abest, quod omnibus annis per vices in officium proconsulis mittitur*).<sup>50</sup> An interesting letter on papyrus informs the tribune of a cohort that 28 soldiers from his unit, who had been sent to serve the procurator, had been returned to the cohort after they were replaced.<sup>51</sup> Individual replacements are mentioned on another papyrus, though it is unclear whether these were part of a routine rotation or to replace incapacitated soldiers;<sup>52</sup> likewise, a second century ostrakon from Egypt mentioning the dispatch of two cavalymen in place of two others is interpreted by Bagnall as a 'relief shift'.<sup>53</sup> We are not able to trace the postings of any

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<sup>44</sup> *P. Mich.* 3.203, lines 8-16.

<sup>45</sup> *RMR* 10.

<sup>46</sup> Frustratingly, many of the months and some of the years of departure/return have been lost, but most of the jobs seem to take a matter of months rather than years.

<sup>47</sup> Speidel (1988).

<sup>48</sup> *RMR* 1 and 2.

<sup>49</sup> Breeze (1977), 4.

<sup>50</sup> Speidel (2006), 8: field 2, lines 3-4.

<sup>51</sup> *RMR* 89, no. 4.

<sup>52</sup> *RMR* 11.

<sup>53</sup> *O.Florida* 3.

individual *milites* across their entire careers – if this were possible, it seems likely that all soldiers would have spent numerous periods away from their base, on detachments lasting anywhere from a few days to several years; some, perhaps, might never have seen the legion's main base, being directly recruited or immediately sent to a segment of the legion in a different theatre of operations. One wonders if Lucius Flaminus of *III Augusta*, whose tombstone states that he served nineteen years *in praecidio* before his death, ever served anywhere else.<sup>54</sup>

Combat vexillations might effectively become mobile field armies of their own. *RIB* 1322 (*AE* 1903, 360) is a building dedication to Antoninus Pius from the AD 150s found at Newcastle. This text had posed some interpretative difficulties, but now generally accepted (including by the *RIB* editors) is the interpretation of Speidel: the vexillations mentioned in the inscription had been sent to Germany from Britain, but had now returned – though not to their legions, but to Newcastle, to face some other threat.<sup>55</sup> If this is the case, this would be a very clear example of a vexillation acting as a mobile field army rather than detached for one specific task, presumably operating with near-total independence. Vexillations might even levy recruits directly from their areas of operations – for example, in the second and third centuries, when most recruits to *III Augusta* were African, and the province was perfectly capable of fulfilling the legion's recruiting needs, we find clusters of recruits from the Danube provinces.<sup>56</sup> These men thus seem to have been recruited to replace losses in the legion's Danube vexillations, and though these individuals eventually travelled back to North Africa, recruits to more permanent detachments may never have seen the legion's main base.<sup>57</sup>

All this implies that the main body of the legion might be greatly understrength

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<sup>54</sup> *CIL* VIII, 14603.

<sup>55</sup> Speidel (1987), 235-6.

<sup>56</sup> *CIL* VIII, 18085; VIII 2586, 17622, 18312.

<sup>57</sup> Mann (1983), 40-1.

most of the time. It would be most illuminating to know how many men would be away on detached service at any one time, but this is impossible to figure out: one could gather all the temporally coincident inscriptions which mention vexillations of a particular legion, but these inscriptions almost never give an indication of the numbers involved, nor could we be sure that other vexillations had gone unrecorded, nor should we expect records of the multitude of smaller detachments to have survived. There is one kind of evidence which allows us to probe the issue: unit strength reports of various kinds, which give some indication of the total strength of a unit and the proportion of its men on detached service.<sup>58</sup>

Unfortunately, there are only two documents which provide certain numbers of absentees, both referring to auxiliary units. First, the strength report of *cohors I Tungrorum* from Vindolanda, dated c. AD 90, puts the unit's total strength at 752 men. However, only 296 men (39%) were present at the main base; 456 were absent, some in tiny detachments (6, 9, 11 men), some in two larger detachments (45 and 46 men), and the rest in a large force of 337 men at Corbridge.<sup>59</sup> The second document, a record of a *cohors quingenaria equitata* in Egypt, probably dating to AD 215, gives 126 men out of the unit's total of 457, or 28%, as *absunt in choram* (col ii, line 31).<sup>60</sup>

We can add the duty rosters of *cohors XX Palmyrenorum*, which show 194 men (about a fifth of maximum total strength) on garrison duty elsewhere in the year 219, and up to 125 men away in the year 222.<sup>61</sup> However, the documents are damaged and names are missing, so that there would almost certainly have been more men listed as serving elsewhere. 'Hunt's *Pridianum*', an early second century record of *cohors I Hispanorum*,

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<sup>58</sup> Most of these examples are listed by Bowman and Thomas (1991), 63-6. Although each can contribute to our understanding of the administration of unit reports, very few survive in such a state that they can assist with the issue of total unit strength and numbers of detached soldiers.

<sup>59</sup> Bowman and Thomas (1991), 67.

<sup>60</sup> *P. Brooklyn* 24; on which see Thomas and Davies (1977).

<sup>61</sup> *RMR* 1 and 2; Breeze (1977).

does not preserve numbers of those on detached service, but looking at the eighteen different kinds of detached service it lists, one is left with little doubt that like *cohors I Tungrorum*, most of the unit's men were probably absent, with such duties as garrisoning Piroboridava and vexillation service at Buridava no doubt occupying many soldiers.<sup>62</sup> I am also tempted to speculate that the duty roster of a *centuria* of *III Cyrenaica*, which appears to show the *centuria* at half-strength, may only record those men who were at the base, and that the rest of the strength of the *centuria* was on long-term detached service.<sup>63</sup> Of course, the roster still includes men on short-term detached service, such as one man sent to the granary at Neapolis.

We are fortunate to possess a number of documents which describe the kinds of tasks soldiers might be required to perform away from the base. On the Dura rosters of *cohors XX Palmyrenorum* discussed above (*RMR* 1 and 2), besides the men sent to various outposts, we observe escorts, food and barley collecting, scouting, conveying letters, and accompanying a freedman.<sup>64</sup> There is even the notation *ad leones* for seven soldiers in 219 and four in 222, suggesting either the escort of beasts or their hunting and capture. The former is favoured by Christopher Epplett, whose collection of evidence for the Roman military's involvement in hunting shows that it was common for soldiers to be involved in the capture and transport of exotic animals.<sup>65</sup>

*RMR* 10, pertaining to *legio III Cyrenaica* in the years 80-87, lists the departures and returns of individual soldiers performing duties outside the camp – a 'check-list' of absent men. The following duties are mentioned: going to the granary (*ad frumentum*); dredging harbours (*ad hormos confodiendos*); accompanying a centurion for an unspecified task; likewise accompanying a freedman for some task; making papyrus (*ad*

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<sup>62</sup> *RMR* 63, esp. col. ii, lines 17-40.

<sup>63</sup> *RMR* 9.

<sup>64</sup> Helpfully tabulated in Davies (1989), 44.

<sup>65</sup> Epplett (2001).

*chartam comficiendam*); river patrol (*potamofulacide*); and possibly accompanying a grain convoy (*exit cum frum-* is all that survives). These were tasks which seem to have taken a few months each, with the soldiers going to and from the base on a regular basis.

*RMR 47*, a morning report of *cohors XX Palmyrenorum* dating some time from the early third century, states for each day how many men were in the unit, and also mentions any comings and goings on those days. The only sufficiently detailed parts for our purpose mention an unspecified number of men sent on some task related to the grain supply – the letters *ument* survive, and Fink suggests *missi ad frumentum comparandum* (col I., line 13); this is very plausible, since col ii., line 4 reads *missi ad hordeum comparandum*. The following line adds an escort for the barley collector (*missi in prosec hordiator*), and later we have a wood-gatherer for the bath (*missus lig balnei*). It is feasible that the lengthier tasks, such as those involving the grain convoy, would also have been entered into a document like *RMR 10*.

*RMR 63* is a type of unit strength document (we need not detain ourselves with the question of whether it should be considered a *pridianum* or some special strength report), concerning *cohors I Hispanorum Veterana*, stationed in Moesia at the beginning of the second century. It gives the unit's strength, before subtracting those permanently lost to transfer or death, and those temporarily absent. First, absentees outside the province are listed and totalled; duties outside the province involved collecting clothing, possibly grain, and horses; garrison duty; and either guarding or working at the mines in Dardania (none of the numbers survives). Within the province, a number of interesting duties are listed: attendance upon the legate and procurator; garrison duty at Piroboridava; *in uexillatione* at Buridava; *in expeditionem* across the Danube; defending the crops (*ad annonam defendendam*); scouting (*exploratum*) with the centurion; some task relating to the grain ships; at headquarters with the *librarii*; fetching cattle from the mountains; and guarding

draft animals. Also relevant is *P. Brooklyn 24*, mentioned above for its 126 men *absunt in choram*, whose duties are largely illegible or unspecific, but included escort duty, fetching hides, and carrying letters.

Certainly, there were many tasks requiring specialist skills which could cause military personnel to be withdrawn from their legions, such as engineering or the papyrus-making mentioned in *RMR 10* which presumably required special facilities. However, the main tasks on the papyri are garrison duty, escort duty, fetching goods, and attending high-ranking personnel – none of which would require particularly specialised skills. Ordinary legionaries (‘ready-trained odd-job men’, as MacMullen refers to them)<sup>66</sup> would therefore be of use for a great many duties away from the base, and could expect to be called away frequently. As I explored in chapter 6, many of these duties brought soldiers into contact with civilians.

#### Detached Service: Implications

In sum, our evidence indicates that a large proportion – sometimes the majority – of a given military unit would regularly be absent from the main body of the legion at its base. Men might be detached individually, in small groups, or in large vexillations, and could be expected to perform a variety of tasks, which might see them travelling a short distance from their legion or to an entirely different province, and which might provide assistance to the soldiers’ own legion or to a completely different unit. Mike Bishop’s conclusion on the nature of garrisoning applies equally well to any task undertaken by the army: ‘we should accept the concept of fragmented garrisoning, manifested in the almost infinite divisibility of any one unit to meet particular needs.’<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> MacMullen (1963), 24.

<sup>67</sup> Bishop (1999), 116.

The implications of the preceding discussion are enormous for how we conceive of the Roman army, and greatly complicate the previous chapters of this thesis. The most immediately striking implication is the apparent disregard for maintaining unit integrity or cohesion. In my discussion of the primary group and interpersonal bonds, I noted that there is almost no evidence for Roman commanders thinking that small group cohesion was important for combat performance, and some evidence for commanders being willing to split units up when preparing for battle. For non-combat tasks, we can say with certainty that prevailing practice was to select men from across numerous units, probably to distribute the burden.

Some scholars have suggested that Roman commanders generally endeavoured to detach as few soldiers as possible, citing an exchange between Pliny and Trajan.<sup>68</sup> Pliny asks Trajan whether he should use soldiers rather than public slaves to guard prisons; while he fears that the public slaves are untrustworthy, he is equally concerned that if the soldiers mingle with them, they too might become negligent, as well as the fact that the duty would take up too much time for too many soldiers.<sup>69</sup> Trajan responds by dissuading Pliny from assigning the soldiers, and is quite clear that as few soldiers as possible should be ‘taken away from the standards’: *illud haereat nobis, quam paucissimos a signis avocandos esse*.<sup>70</sup> This is repeated in a different letter: when asked by the prefect Gavius Bassus for more soldiers, Trajan considers above all else that soldiers should, as far as possible, not be absent from the standards.<sup>71</sup> Pliny and Trajan granted extra troops to the procurator Maximus only because he was engaged in an ‘extraordinary errand’ (collecting stores of corn from Paphlagonia).<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> E.g. Symonds (2018), 10; Davies (1989), 56; Goldsworthy (1996), 24.

<sup>69</sup> Plin. *Ep.* 10.19.

<sup>70</sup> Plin. *Ep.* 10.20.

<sup>71</sup> Plin. *Ep.* 10.21-22.

<sup>72</sup> Plin. *Ep.* 10.27-28.

Interpreting these exchanges, however, is far from straightforward. Symonds and Davies explicitly link Trajan's comments to the practice of detached garrisoning,<sup>73</sup> but removing soldiers *a signis* is just as likely to mean removing them from military duties as taking them away from the unit's main base. Indeed, Trajan's suspicion about whether Gavius Bassus needed the men, or was motivated by personal ambition,<sup>74</sup> suggests that he was more concerned about soldiers being put to improper use than that units might be split up. Compare the advice of the second century jurist Terrentius Paternus, who counselled that soldiers should not be sent *ad opus privatum*, citing the authority of the *disciplina Augusti*;<sup>75</sup> similarly, an anecdote from Suetonius has Tiberius dismissing a legate for sending soldiers to accompany his freedman on a hunting expedition.<sup>76</sup> Imperial suspicions and an ideology of discipline which thoroughly disapproved of soldiers being idle or engaged in inappropriate activities provide more convincing interpretations of Trajan's advice.<sup>77</sup>

In his speech at Lambaesis, Hadrian does indicate his awareness of the disruption caused by the vexillations sent out by *III Augusta*, and states that *diversae stationes vos distinent* when he praises the legion for nevertheless attending well to its training.<sup>78</sup> However, no disapproval of the situation is implied, simply a recognition of how it might impact preparations for the display which the emperor witnessed. There is no good evidence to think that Roman commanders were supposed to minimise the number of men serving away from the main base, and given both the ubiquity of detached garrisons and their necessity in the imperial frontier system, it seems highly unlikely that anyone would be reluctant to assign them proper garrisons. Indeed, Aelius Aristides makes the fact that

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<sup>73</sup> See n. 69.

<sup>74</sup> Plin. *Ep.* 10.22: *multum interest, res poscat an hoc nomine eis uti latius velit.*

<sup>75</sup> *D.* 49.16.12.1.

<sup>76</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 19.

<sup>77</sup> Phang (2008), esp. ch. 6.

<sup>78</sup> Speidel (2006), 8: field 2.

garrisons are dispersed (*ἐνεσπαρμέναι ταῖς χώραις*) a point of praise.<sup>79</sup> In sum, there is no reason to think that the fragmentation and dispersal of military units was anything other than standard practice. The idea, then, that the men with whom a soldier served were always close comrades, and that unit cohesion was important to the efficiency of the army, seems increasingly unconvincing.

We can do better than merely speculate about how the detachment system might have impacted soldiers' experience of military service. The Didymoi ostraca, which illustrate the shifting, mobile nature of garrison duty, with soldiers frequently moving between posts and serving with different comrades, provide a wonderful insight into how the system affected the men.<sup>80</sup> Although these ostraca have their specific context, we have seen that the extreme mobility of soldiers and the fragmentation of units were aspects of military organisation across the empire. The following short discussion examines soldiers responding to universal aspects of the system, and their experiences thus have general relevance.

We witness, for example, that soldiers were often separated from those they had come to like – one soldier sympathises with a comrade whose friend Apuleius had been moved away from him by sharing the fact that he too has been parted from two close friends.<sup>81</sup> Along with the author's uncertain hope that he will see them again ('the gods willing, we shall kiss them again') we see from this letter the emotional consequences of a system which apparently moved men around as needed, regardless of bonds of fellowship.<sup>82</sup> One letter possibly shows a soldier attempting to get a comrade transferred to the same station as himself ('...in order that we can apply for your getting transferred

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<sup>79</sup> Aristid. 14.67.

<sup>80</sup> Cuvigny (2012) compiles and discusses the ostraca; Reddé (2018) gives an overview of fortlets in the eastern desert of Egypt.

<sup>81</sup> *O.Did.* 424.

<sup>82</sup> Bülow-Jacobsen (2012) implies there may be more than comradeship in this particular letter (p. 360: 'our curiosity as to the exact nature of their friendship must remain unsatisfied').

here': ...ἵνα πρόσδοτον ποιησόμεθα τοῦ καταβῆναί σε);<sup>83</sup> this might be arranged through a centurion, since another soldier is encouraged to transfer to the *melius presidium* at which his friend resides by asking the centurion.<sup>84</sup> It would not be surprising if this, like *O.Krok.* 95 cited above, involved potential bribery.

In one letter, Sertorius writes to another soldier, Iulius Bithynus, and mentions that Bithynus had previously warned about a certain *commanipularis* (κομονοπλάριος) with whom he had served, but Sertorius had not believed what Bithynus had reported about the man. Now, however, Sertorius finds himself serving in garrison with that very *commanipularis* – who, he claims, ‘wages war on us by giving false evidence’ (εἰς ἡμας ἄνθρωπος πολεμεῖ, ὁ κομονοπλάρις σου, ψευδομαρτυρων).<sup>85</sup> This is a fascinating insight into a fragmented military community, with a network of acquaintances gossiping with one another, knowing some men through joint service and others through reputation (a soldier with a more positive reputation is mentioned in another letter – Διονυσάριον τιμῶ).<sup>86</sup>

Soldiers attempt to find out about the movements of their comrades – one Gaius Antonius asks Longinus Crispus if he has heard anything about the relief force (σουπκεσόπων = Latin *successorum*),<sup>87</sup> while Iulius tells Valerius to write to him if he moves to a different post;<sup>88</sup> it must have slipped Sabinus’ mind to tell Theodorus that he had transferred to Didymoi, since Theodorus writes and says that he had not known he was there until recently (else he would have sent vegetables).<sup>89</sup> Most of the correspondence includes soldiers sending goods and money to one another, using supply networks and couriers or taking advantage of garrison transfers to arrange deliveries – in one letter,

<sup>83</sup> *O.Did.* 412, lines 3-5; possibly cf. *O.Did.* 465.

<sup>84</sup> *O.Did.* 326, lines 5-7.

<sup>85</sup> *O.Did.* 325.

<sup>86</sup> *O.Did.* 337, lines 5-6.

<sup>87</sup> *O.Did.* 339, lines 8-10; cf. *O.Did.* 341 and *O.Krok.* 96.

<sup>88</sup> *O.Did.* 319, lines 18-19.

<sup>89</sup> *O.Did.* 428, lines 4-7.

Longinus has sent Numerius two bags, which Numerius promises to deliver to Longinus' wife if he goes to Koptos.<sup>90</sup> In a later letter, Cassius writes from Aphroditis Orous to Tiberius at Didymoi, and says that if another soldier called Lucius is soon to travel to Aphroditis Orous, Tiberius can get him to take the 26 drachmas he owes Cassius back with him.<sup>91</sup> We frequently get the impression of uncertainty about where other soldiers are or where they are going, with correspondents attempting to find out partly in order to use transferring comrades to deliver goods and messages.

Many of these aspects of military life are echoed in sources from elsewhere. A nice illustration of an individual soldier's mobility and uncertain location is found in a writing tablet from Carlisle which gives two possible addresses for its recipient (*Trimontio aut Luguvalio*);<sup>92</sup> Hassall and Tomlin suggest by way of explanation that either the man's legion had forces at both locations, or that the individual travelled frequently between the two.<sup>93</sup> The Vindolanda tablets, in which soldiers exchange and acquire necessities,<sup>94</sup> express irritation at their comrades' failure to write to them,<sup>95</sup> and sort out their debts<sup>96</sup> contain much the same concerns as the desert ostraca. The system of bureaucracy and bribery behind transfers and detachments remains opaque, but its effects on the men who were shuffled around and reassigned, set to watch over lonely desert outposts or travel to distant lands, are discernible.

Many assignments could involve living with a very small number of fellow soldiers: Jilek and Breeze tabulate a selection of seventeen milecastles and fortlets from northern Europe, occupied by groups as small as eight men in areas as small as 0.026

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<sup>90</sup> *O.Did.* 342.

<sup>91</sup> *O.Did.* 462.

<sup>92</sup> *AE* 1988, 843.

<sup>93</sup> Frere, Hassall and Tomlin (1988), 496 n. 42.

<sup>94</sup> *Tab. Vindol.* 346.

<sup>95</sup> *Tab. Vindol.* 311.

<sup>96</sup> *Tab. Vindol.* 312.

hectares.<sup>97</sup> In one of the ostraca from Mons Claudianus, a *curator* by the name of Nepheros mentions that he has only three soldiers at his disposal – and that if he complies with a request to send one on a task (perhaps transporting the column mentioned at the start of the letter), he will not be able to send anyone to the quarry.<sup>98</sup> Nepheros sounds a little fed up with the demands of Sokrates, the man requesting the soldier, saying that ‘you know he uses much manpower for transportation’.<sup>99</sup>

As well as decreased contact with members of their units, soldiers on detached service may also have spent less time with their dependents and families, depending on whether or not they travelled together. In the letter of Satornilos to his mother, Satornilos has been at Pselkis with his family for three months, but is soon to depart for an 18-month stint on garrison duty; he thus arranges for his brother to come and collect his children and their mother.<sup>100</sup> Bagnall compares another letter, in which Maximus asks his ‘sister’ when she is due to give birth, clearly indicating their physical separation.<sup>101</sup> In the Didymoi letters, we encounter Lucia, the wife of Longinus, who is at Koptos – Longinus arranges for a comrade to bring two bags to her.<sup>102</sup>

Breeze, focusing on archaeological evidence from Britain, has attempted to investigate whether women and families accompanied men outposted to smaller installations, just as they followed the unit as a whole when it was reassigned.<sup>103</sup> As one might expect given the difficulties of the evidence even at larger fortresses, archaeological data which might indicate a civilian presence alongside the garrisons of these small outposts is incredibly difficult to come by and interpret. Nevertheless, there is evidence for

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<sup>97</sup> Jilek and Breeze (2007), 203.

<sup>98</sup> *O.Claud.* 889.

<sup>99</sup> Lines 9-11: οἶδες δὲ ὅτι ὄχλον πολ[ὺ]ν δαπανᾷ. ἰ[ς] τὴν κατάστ[ασιν].

<sup>100</sup> *P.Mich.* 3.203; p. 114 above.

<sup>101</sup> *O.Florida* 14; Bagnall (1976), 30, 51-4.

<sup>102</sup> *O.Did.* 346 and 342.

<sup>103</sup> Breeze (2015).

extramural settlements at places such as Maiden Castle and Castleshaw in the Pennines – the latter only occupied for a couple of decades.<sup>104</sup>

Written evidence provides much stronger evidence for civilians living at Maximianon and Krokodilo – and living in the interior of the *praesidia*. Cuvigny cites examples of servants, families, civilians such as stonemasons, wives and prostitutes, concluding that ‘*est claire: ...les civils qui vivaient en symbiose avec ces petites garnisons cohabitaient avec les militaires à l'intérieur des murs*’.<sup>105</sup> In the previous chapter, we explored the plentiful evidence for prostitutes at eastern desert bases, and the complex systems related to the practice of prostitution, including sophisticated contractual arrangements. As for wives, a few letters concern a woman called Theanous living at Didymoi, where she gave birth.<sup>106</sup> A man who is presumably the child’s father writes to express his delight at the birth, perhaps indicating that he had been taken elsewhere on duty while his heavily pregnant wife was unable to travel.<sup>107</sup> In a later letter, Theanous has left Didymoi.<sup>108</sup> We thus have a woman living and bearing children at an outpost, and travelling throughout the region.

We know from the Mons Claudianus ostraca that travel was restricted through the use of passes called *pittakia*, which probably entitled the holder to use military installations on the road.<sup>109</sup> The *pittakia* we possess include examples of women and children being permitted to pass, though these were the families of centurions.<sup>110</sup> A similar system was used at other networks of bases: four passes have been identified among the Didymoi ostraca.<sup>111</sup> Since we know that civilians were present at Didymoi and other desert

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<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 229; Maiden Castle: Welfare (2001); Castleshaw: Redhead (1998).

<sup>105</sup> Cuvigny (2003b), 361.

<sup>106</sup> *O.Did.* 402-5.

<sup>107</sup> Bülow-Jacobsen (2012), 333.

<sup>108</sup> *O.Did.* 405.

<sup>109</sup> Bülow-Jacobsen (1997b), 246; Van Rengen (1992), 57-61.

<sup>110</sup> E.g. *O.Claud.* 58: *πάρετε γυναῖκα μίαν καὶ παῖδες [δύο]*.

<sup>111</sup> Cuvigny (2012b), 117-21.

bases, it might be wondered whether they had received official permission to be there, which would indicate that, as with fortresses, civilians were not banned from such spaces on principle.

There is no reason to doubt that some families did accompany soldiers on detached service, though others remained at the main base or in towns; the decision probably had much to do with the isolation and habitability of the destination. Arrian mentions veteran soldiers and traders living outside a fort at Phasis occupied by 400 soldiers, near to a harbour which presumably kept the area well-connected and supplied.<sup>112</sup> However, we should note that Maiden Castle, Castleshaw, and other fortlets with evidence for extramural settlement lay in relatively isolated locations,<sup>113</sup> and as we saw in the previous chapter, dependents were not deterred from following the army into dangerous and inhospitable conflict zones. Arrian certainly indicates that the fort at Phasis was threatened by violence – ‘the wall has strong foundations and war machines have been positioned upon it, and in a word, everything is fitted out so as to prevent any of the barbarians from approaching it’.<sup>114</sup> Visits from entertainers, prostitutes, and traders might be less frequent than the daily visits to the legionary base mentioned by Apollinaris;<sup>115</sup> in one of the Didymoi letters, a soldier appears to reassure his comrade at a different post that a certain prostitute will make her way down once she has finished her ‘tour’ (*ὅν πληρόσι τὰ ἡμαίρια καταβήσεται*), indicating the potential irregularity of such visits.<sup>116</sup> Enterprising individuals could do well for themselves by travelling from outpost to outpost as need demanded: as Cuvigny envisages it, ‘le monde des *praesidia* est un grand village atomisé’.<sup>117</sup> The extended military community as examined in chapter 7, then, was a fairly universal part of

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<sup>112</sup> Arr. *Peripl.* 9.3-5.

<sup>113</sup> Breeze (2015), 229-233.

<sup>114</sup> Arr. *Peripl.* 9.4.

<sup>115</sup> *P.Mich.* 466, lines 36-7.

<sup>116</sup> *O.Did.* 331.

<sup>117</sup> Cuvigny (2003b), 395.

the legionary experience.

The image of a highly fragmented and mobile army reinforces my analysis of violence against civilians in chapter 6: small groups of soldiers were frequently to be found travelling the roads, far from major fortresses and from any restraining influences. We learn from the harassed villagers of Skaptopara that ‘soldiers dispatched elsewhere leave their proper routes (*στρατιῶται ἀλλαγῶν πεμπόμενοι καταλιμπάνοντες τὰς ἰδίας ὁδοὺς*), and appear before us and force us to provide them with hospitality and provisions, paying nothing whatsoever.’<sup>118</sup> Since detachments were rather small, their ‘commanders’ could be otherwise quite lowly individuals – in one case a *signifer*, and *I.Pan.* 51 refers to a *curator* (the term used on ostraca for detachment commanders) simply as a man ‘of the century of Bassus’ rather than by rank, perhaps indicating an ordinary *miles*;<sup>119</sup> Cuvigny likewise suggests that *O.Krok.* 87 shows the *curator* of Thonis Megale to have been *un simple cavalier, ἵππευς*.<sup>120</sup>

At small installations, military routine would certainly have continued to some extent, but discipline would almost certainly have been laxer, and not just when it came to restraining soldiers from mistreating the civilian population. The drill and labour examined in chapter 5 as key methods for maintaining order could hardly have been implemented with such rigour by a low-ranking *curator* overseeing a handful of men at a remote outpost. Allison suggests that discipline may have been more relaxed at supply forts like Oberstimm, where one finds greater concentrations of gaming equipment.<sup>121</sup> Paired with my conclusion in chapter 5 that there is very little evidence for frequent harsh disciplinary measures in the imperial army, these considerations further suggest that most soldiers were not tightly bound to the army by rigid discipline.

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<sup>118</sup> *AE* 1994, 1552.

<sup>119</sup> Symonds (2018), 20-1.

<sup>120</sup> Cuvigny (2003a), 314-5.

<sup>121</sup> Allison (2013), 351.

It is fascinating to consider how soldiers in detachments distant from their units related to their legions. As the inscriptions examined so far show, vexillations continued to express their legion affiliation; individual soldiers also did so – consider the opulent shield boss of Junius Dubitatus, a soldier of *VIII Augusta* on detached service on Britain, which is inscribed with the name of the legion as well as depicting its emblem, the bull.<sup>122</sup> The *De Munitionibus Castrorum* contains an interesting piece of advice: vexillations from other legions should not be placed near the ramparts, because if the enemy gain entry then suspicion will fall upon these men and their less senior commander, presumably leading to disruptive distrust and argument.<sup>123</sup> It is entirely possible that this advice (or perhaps statement of common practice) was a response to real incidents which had been caused by tension between units, and suggests that vexillations would keep to themselves when serving alongside other legions.

Fascinating evidence for how detached soldiers related to their legions is provided by three inscriptions from Spain, in which a vexillation of *legio VII Gemina* makes dedications to Jupiter Optimus Maximus *ob natalem aquilae* (for/on the occasion of the birthday of the eagle).<sup>124</sup> The inscriptions are separated by at least twenty years (*AE* 1967, 229 dates from some time in the reign of Antoninus Pius; 230 dates specifically to AD 181), and all three give different commanders in charge of the vexillation. We thus have a long-term detached force, which ‘participates’ in the annual celebrations of the legion’s birthday from afar – perhaps with a parallel ceremony of its own, during which these dedications would be set up.

I argued previously that legions possessed distinct identities, and that soldiers did feel great pride and attachment towards these units, fostered by ceremonies and traditions.

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<sup>122</sup> *CIL* VII, 495; British Museum no. 1893,1213.1.

<sup>123</sup> *DMC* 5; Lenoir (1979), 49-50, 123 and Tully (2002) show that these *vexillarii legionum* are legionary combat vexillations rather than veterans or ‘banner-carriers’.

<sup>124</sup> *CIL* II, 6183; *AE* 1967, 229 and 230.

One might assume that the present chapter, exploring just how fragmented legions were, would suggest weaker bonds between soldier and legion – but I believe that the opposite is true. If primary groups and small units were constantly split up, so that soldiers did not in fact consistently serve alongside long-standing friends, a more enduring and abstract source of identity like the legion would gain in importance. Reifying affiliation to the legion may even have been more significant for soldiers serving away from the legion's base – since the cohorts and centuries from which these men were drawn would have been varied, their unifying identity lay in the legion. Inscriptions attesting a *genius vexillationis* suggest that vexillations themselves might also begin to acquire a corporate identity;<sup>125</sup> there are also numerous references to a *Τύχη τοῦ πραισιδίου* – which ‘must be strongly influenced by, if not identical with, *genius praesidii*’.<sup>126</sup>

In this chapter, we have moved our examination of military service away from large legionary bases, observing just how dispersed a unit could be. This has tremendous implications for the idea of unit cohesion: if units were often divided up, with men separated not just from their legions, but from their cohorts, *centuriae*, and *contubernia*, then we must conclude that the army had little regard for the notion that men should serve alongside the same comrades throughout their period of service. Perhaps the advantage of the army's several subdivisions – identified by Josephus as crucial to Roman military efficiency and thus worthy of emulation – was the fact that these subunits could more easily facilitate the selection and detachment of men for deployment elsewhere.<sup>127</sup>

We ought to think of military communities as ‘fragmented communities’, or ‘dispersed communities’; it is likely that no legion ever had all of its soldiers in the same place at the same time. Simon James has suggested that we think of the Roman army as an

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<sup>125</sup> *CIL* XIII 7943 and 7946, from Iversheim.

<sup>126</sup> Bülow-Jacobsen (1997), 65-8.

<sup>127</sup> Jos. *BJ.* 2.578.

‘imagined community’ – drawing an analogy with Anderson’s concept of nationality as a social construct which exists only inasmuch as a large group of people imagine themselves to be joined in a community,<sup>128</sup> James argues that the army was also an imagined collective composed of numerous units.<sup>129</sup> I think that individual legions too can be usefully considered imagined communities – although the legion might be said to ‘be’ wherever the eagle was, with larger detachments clearly marked out as separated bodies under a vexillation banner, a majority of its men could be split up across multiple locations. Anderson’s comment on the nation – ‘It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion’ – can apply equally well to a Roman legion.<sup>130</sup> The inscriptions showing a vexillation celebrating the *natalis aquilae* of its legion are important evidence for the processes by which the legion’s disparate parts imagined themselves as a whole: on the same day, across the empire, all those who belonged to the legion celebrated its foundation, presumably recalling aspects of its history and traditions, and thus reified a virtual community among thousands of men who had never even seen many of the members of their legion.

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<sup>128</sup> Anderson (1991).

<sup>129</sup> James (1999), 18; (2002), 42-4.

<sup>130</sup> Anderson (1991), 6.

## Conclusion

In chapter 1, I considered the evidence for strong primary group affiliations in the Roman army, focusing on *contubernia* and centuries, as well as considering interpersonal bonds more generally. Moving beyond the simple assumption that small units in the Roman army could be considered straightforwardly analogous to primary groups in modern militaries, and attempting to test the evidence, I concluded that although I disagree with Lendon's dismissal of primary group bonds, there is a lack of strong positive evidence to back up claims regarding the importance of primary groups in the Roman army. Given the specific modern context in which foundational studies of primary groups were conducted, we cannot simply assume their relevance in the ancient world.

Although there is little evidence for the significance of *contubernia* (the groups with which modern scholars most commonly draw an analogy to modern infantry squads), there is evidence that centuries formed an important part of a legionary's identity. This makes sense in connection with my discussion of the importance of centuries in the structure of a legionary's everyday life: centurial belonging was reinforced by the role of centuries in the organisation of work tasks, communal eating, and sleeping. This chapter introduced many of the key themes which were explored throughout the thesis: social networks, identity, and everyday life in the army.

In chapter 2, I moved to the second level of affiliation, the unit, by focusing on the legion. Here, there was more positive evidence indicating a strong affiliation with the legion, in a way which can legitimately be compared with modern regimental systems. Furthermore, unlike with primary groups, there is evidence that unit-level attachment was recognised as important by the ancient sources, and indeed by Roman emperors and commanders. Unit-level attachment was powerfully tied to normative motivation: the legionary's sense of shame and honour was intertwined with his unit, which provided an

enduring entity to which soldiers could maintain a deep emotional attachment.

In chapter 3, I examined the relationship between the soldiers and the emperor. Emperors (and the imperial bureaucracy) made thorough efforts to manifest the figure of the emperor for the soldiery, connecting him to many key aspects of military life, including discipline, pay, and rewards. Local commanders, by contrast, were not supposed to intrude on the emperor's authority in such areas. But despite these sophisticated attempts to manifest the emperor, one could hardly suggest that Roman soldiers were subject to intensive ideological indoctrination, or were supposed to be fanatically devoted to the emperor. Indeed, it is hard to imagine that most soldiers were unaware of the power that they themselves when it came to making and deposing emperors, and their commitment to any particular emperor may have had a transactional quality. It is particularly difficult to make judgements about legionary sentiment on this issue, given that the evidence is both thin and often formulaic. However, the glimpses we have do suggest that soldiers actively engaged in constructing a virtual relationship with the emperor, whose distance may in fact have amplified his majesty. For most soldiers, opinion lay somewhere between cynicism and devotion.

In assessing the relative importance of the 'collectivities' at the end of chapter 3, I stressed the noteworthiness of the evidence for unit-level attachment. Whereas primary group bonds can result somewhat naturally from the close association of people, particularly in dislocating and stressful situations, unit-level attachment is a recognisably contingent phenomenon, one which has been absent from many militaries, ancient and modern, such as in the armies of classical Athens and the US in World War II. The fact that our evidence explicitly attests emotional attachment to legions, when these could just as conceivably have been simple organisational units, is significant. Evidence for attachment to primary groups or the emperor is not as strong, but nor is it lacking, and the fact that

such a large and complex institution furnishes evidence for all three levels of attachment should not surprise us.

In chapter 4, I turned to the second part of the framework by investigating the remunerative/calculative relationship. The organisation of pay, with soldiers moderately compensated but promised a lucrative retirement bonus, served to encourage loyal service, while the emperor's position as the provider of all pay, prizes, and awards further amplified his presence. I also identified an important social divide, with poorer recruits making up the rank and file while a smaller stream of literate recruits was channelled towards the officer positions.

Nonetheless, there is little evidence for remuneration having a significant effect on legionary motivation, or being a key component of a legionary's relationship with the army. Pay was regular (and highly bureaucratised); further financial incentives or disincentives do not seem to have been proffered very often. More interesting are the connections to normative motivation which emerged from this discussion: rewards for good service usually had symbolic value, relying on the legionary's moral involvement, while the pay system served to further integrate the lives of legionaries into the military.

In chapter 5, I examined discipline (the alienative/coercive relationship). Undoubtedly, the Roman army was a brutal environment, but one in which the more mundane topics of drill, castramentation, and repetitive work were more important than spectacular punishments. Beyond the methods of a few extreme commanders in extreme situations, we have little reason to believe that fear played a particularly important part in most legionaries' relationship to the army. Again, the connection of discipline to normative motivation was striking: punishments relying on shame – some of which were directed against units rather than individuals – required moral involvement to be effective, and intensive drill was supposed to inculcate a proper work ethic and sense of commitment,

rather than brutalising soldiers.

Chapters 6-8 provided some essential complications to the preceding chapters, while also addressing the normative section of the framework by building an image of the army as a society. In chapter 6, I examined relations between soldiers and civilians. I concluded strongly that military communities were socially isolated from surrounding populations, with many of the tasks which legionaries undertook leading to antagonism by their very nature. The image of an insular institution, inward-looking and isolated, squares well with my arguments for legionaries' loyalties being focused on their units. The army was supposed to be an institution apart – and it was, with soldiers directed towards the military for the fulfilment of social needs and a sense of identity. Thoroughly embedded in the army, a soldier's interests were so deeply connected to the institution that conformity to military values was a necessity.

The soldier/civilian dichotomy is a slightly messy one, as explored in recent scholarship on extended military communities. These formed the subject of chapter 7, in which I explored how extramural communities were a ubiquitous feature of military installations, were complex communities with some sense of corporate identity, and were fully accepted by military planners. However, I noted that modern scholarship has often failed to differentiate between the various groups that made up these communities: women, in particular, are often discussed as a group, with little reflection on the range of experiences which women in the military environment could have, from the wives of generals and high-ranking officers to sex slaves. The attention to veterans, suppliers, and slaves of various situations in this chapter makes it an important addition to our understanding of extended military communities.

This chapter extended the discussion of social life present throughout this thesis by considering the full range of people in a legionary's social milieu, and reinforced the

conclusions of chapter 6, which argued that soldiers were isolated from the main civilian population, by showing how the extended community buttressed soldiers against meaningful interaction with local populations, providing any goods and services that the soldiers might desire; we should not consider military communities more open because they contained a non-military element, but rather recognise that this further ensconced soldiers in a separate social world. Members of the extended community, to an extent, were also drawn into the world of the army, with people like Philokles dealing with soldiers as customers, clients, couriers, enemies, and possibly friends. That said, we should recognise that there was still a separation between members of the military and the extended community: the latter did not participate in military ceremonies or belong to the centuries or legions that were so important to the identities of soldiers. Indeed, sustained discussion of the extended community and its various groups reveals the range of affiliations that these groups might have for the military.

In chapter 8, I explored the practice of detachment in detail, and discussed its implications for the preceding chapters. This is a practice which scholars have often failed to discuss – indeed, I was some way through writing this thesis before I realised what a crucial subject it was. First, concerning attachment, the army's complete disregard for keeping the members of centuries or legions together suggests that interpersonal bonds were not considered important, and soldiers would typically serve alongside people with whom they had no established relationship or common unit attachment. In this light, the case for primary groups being essential to the Roman army cannot be maintained in any strong sense. Although, as I emphasised in my conclusion to chapter 1, the conditions of legionary life did encourage some small-ground bonding and intimacy, my subsequent discussions of unit fragmentation and the use of servile labour have confirmed my conviction that the Roman army did not rely on small groups analogous to modern infantry

squads.

Attachment to legions, on the other hand, may well have been strengthened by detachment. Because attachment to the unit does not rely on personal interactions or bonds, but rather on commitment to a more abstract entity, the fact that a legionary's immediate comrades may have been frequently rotated would not affect his relationship with his legion. In such a context, in fact, the prospect of a fixed point on which to centre one's identity would only have become more attractive. This reinforces my conclusion in chapter 2, that strong unit-level attachment is a notable feature of the Roman army. Given the clear positive evidence for this claim, the fact that it has been reinforced by later chapters, and the thin or even negative evidence for the other two collectivities, I feel confident in stating that the legion was the Roman soldier's most significant collectivity.

Chapters 6-8 diverged somewhat from the combat motivation theory framework with which I began my project. This trio of chapters, covering what we might refer to as the social context of legionary service, was necessary partly to supplement my earlier chapters: a complete discussion of collectivities, as we have seen, is impossible without considering the non-military personnel with whom the military interacted, and the fragmentation of military units. But more significantly, these chapters have revealed a complex, fragmented, multi-layered military society that does not easily map onto the framework with which I started, in which military units, especially legions but also centuries, played a crucial 'imaginary' role for a soldier's identity. The separate social world of the legion, buttressed by the extended community, in which almost all aspects of everyday life involved the military, placed soldiers in a unique environment, the understanding of which is key to comprehending our key themes of military identity, social life, attachment, and motivation.

As I mentioned in my introduction, which covered the intellectual development of

this thesis, I believe the fact that my thesis has sprawled out somewhat from the initially proposed framework has in fact proved the worth of the framework. The questions it led me to pose – and the broad array of topics it led me to address – have demonstrated the interconnectedness of a variety of topics in Roman army studies.

A number of exciting avenues for further investigation have also arisen from this work. As one might discern from the length of chapter 7, I was particularly enthused by the subject of the extended military community. I believe I have expanded our knowledge of this subject significantly with my efforts to look at differences within these communities, and by paying attention to slaves (the work on the experiences of female slaves also addresses a gap in our knowledge of Roman slavery more generally). There are further questions to explore: what proportion of extended communities did slaves comprise? What were the internal dynamics of extended communities – how did traders, veterans, families, and slaves of various status levels interact? What more can we learn about daily interactions between soldiers and members of the extended community?

The other particularly appealing undertaking would be to further investigate how detached soldiers related to their units, as I began to do at the end of chapter 7. How did ceremonies, images, stories, and objects help tie these imagined communities together? Did legionary fortresses hold any emotional or symbolic significance, and how often might a soldier visit one? Can we extend the glimpses into the micro-cultures of outposts offered by the ostraca?

Of course, it would also be fascinating to return to the subject of combat mechanics, and apply my conclusions regarding motivation. I mentioned in the introduction how discussions of factors affecting morale in Roman warfare often consist of lists, with little attempt to assess the relative importance of different factors. Among these,

‘cohesion’, ‘esprit de corps’, and ‘group identity’ are often mentioned.<sup>1</sup> Equipped with a more detailed understanding of these concepts, and the intent to investigate how they affected soldiers in combat, our knowledge of battlefield causation could be greatly improved.

I believe that the imperative put forward by scholars such as Simon James, to treat Roman soldiers as social actors and not simply as automata, has successfully been met in this thesis.<sup>2</sup> I have benefited greatly from a soldier-centric approach, providing new insights into old questions through a shift of perspective, and discovering many new questions too. It is my hope that with archaeological agendas increasingly attuned to the complexities of Roman military communities, our understanding of life in – and alongside – the legions can be extended even further.

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<sup>1</sup> Lee (1996), Goldsworthy (1996), 252-7.

<sup>2</sup> James (1999).

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